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ABSTRACT

The student volunteer movement developed in the 60's in response to a growing concern throughout the country for social problems. Since 1963, the movement has grown from a small group of 5,000 students to an estimated 400,000 students working in over 2,000 programs in more than 80% of the colleges in the country. Most projects are concerned with resolving the problems that plague society. This manual has been produced in response to the need of students who want to start a volunteer program. It is also addressed to those who have a program in operation now, but want to expand or improve it. The purpose of the manual is to share experience already gained and to provide new ideas. (Author/HS)

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a manual for students

volunteering

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ACTION

The student volunteer movement has become an increasingly important part of college life in America. As student volunteer programs have grown in number and expertise, they have significantly increased their impact on and contributions to the communities they serve. Moreover, this type of student involvement in social service programs has been a harbinger of the changes now being effected in higher education.

ACTION endorses and supports the student volunteer movement and offers this manual, one of a series dealing with various aspects of student volunteering, to help students initiate new programs, and expand and improve existing volunteer efforts.

Joe Blatchford

Joseph H. Blatchford
Director

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1 attitudes and aims

The student volunteer movement developed in the 60's in response to a growing concern throughout the country for social problems. Since 1963, the movement has grown from a small group of 5,000 students to an estimated 400,000 students working in over 2,000 programs in more than 80% of the colleges in the country. Most projects are concerned with resolving the problems that plague society. In an Eastern city, students drive a van each morning to provide free meals for school children who are too hungry to learn. In a Southern town, students majoring in architecture and in engineering help local residents renovate low-cost housing units. In the Midwest, a student-run storefront assists Indians and migrant workers with Social Security claims and other legal problems. On the West Coast, a medical van purchased and partially serviced by a student group addresses itself to the problem of preventing disease in an inner-city area. From these examples and statistics, it should be clear that students are deeply involved in social action. Certainly their talent and energy can be a powerful and beneficial force in society.

This manual has been produced in response to the need of students who want to start a volunteer program. It is also addressed to those who have a program in operation now, but want to expand or improve it. The purpose of the manual, is to share experience already gained, and to provide new ideas.

Attitudes

Student volunteers have been providing social services, primarily in the areas of tutoring and recreation, for many years, but within the last couple of decades a significant change has occurred in the concept of volunteering itself. Like all change, it involves a complex interplay of forces that defies neat historical analysis. Perhaps it may best be described as a general awareness that volunteering has nothing to do with "charity." Gone are the Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets and the condescending smile. The change, in short, is a part of a slow and not always successful move away from the attitude of paternalism.

This change began to evolve during the late 1950's and early 1960's. Growing frustration with the failure of existing institutions to deal adequately with social problems motivated students to create and im-

plement their own projects instead of working exclusively through those of existing agencies. New projects were developed within mental hospitals, prisons, and reform schools. Massive tutoring projects sometimes within the school system, sometimes outside it, were developed for inner-city children. Recreation projects were set up for communities, usually in low-income areas. Students were able to provide the energy, imagination, and personal attention that busy agency personnel often could not. And for the most part, the students enjoyed their work. It satisfied their desire to balance academic activity with practical experience in off-campus involvement.

All of these early projects were aimed at the general problem of social environment, however, and not at the system which created it. Few questions were asked that reflected any serious awareness of what it actually meant to participate as a volunteer in community service projects—what the social implications and responsibilities of that involvement were. The main concern of volunteer projects was the volunteer himself, and students who continued to serve remained by and large unaware of the really basic changes that were needed. They hoped that their efforts would improve the living conditions of those who were permanently fixed in their environment and would help others to escape to a "better" life. They assumed that their own life style would serve as a model for those who did manage to escape.

It was during the 1960's that an awareness gradually evolved throughout the nation that people from poor communities must be involved in the decision-making processes that affect their own lives. Community leaders began to challenge the validity of programs that were conceived, staffed, and directed by outsiders. The need for community control was expressed clearly and loudly, and community action programs—some of them national in scope—began to appear in answer to this demand. Inevitably, student volunteers were affected by this change, and began to realize how painfully insensitive they had sometimes been. Despite their best intentions, their projects had often been developed without involving anyone in the community—without even knowing the people, their problems, and their needs. Their projects, in short, were often a reflection of the old paternalistic attitude.

During the late 1960's, therefore, a distinction began to be articulated by student volunteers between projects that were restricted to social *service* and those that also concerned social *change*. Where past programs had focused mainly on alleviating social conditions, new ones began to include the need to change the system that allowed such conditions to exist. This is not to say that services were no longer offered. The needs of people hurt by the system still had to be met, and besides, service itself can be a means of effecting change. What differed was that services began to be defined in the light of an ultimate goal of social change. New and creative projects sprang up—free schools, free clinics, day care centers, and crisis centers—projects that challenged existing institutions by acting as alternatives to them. These projects were often

devised and controlled by the community itself, but students willingly swelled the ranks of volunteers needed to maintain them. Generally they viewed their roles as part of a community effort to change the system instead of patching it up with limited social services.

Aims

As an outgrowth of this new awareness of the *need* for social change, scores of community projects, with the help of students, are now in operation. Many of these projects express their goals explicitly in terms of effecting change; many do not. But inevitably, where change is involved – explicitly or only implicitly – strong barriers exist, and students must be acutely aware of them and of the subtle forms they sometimes assume. To be a positive force for positive change – to help break the barriers – student volunteers must approach their tasks with open eyes and open minds.

For one thing, a student must study his own motives for working in a community. Some of these will surely be personal and emotional, but his actions inevitably will have broad implications. Even if he has no intention of becoming an "activist" and desires only to offer his time and energy to a community-oriented program, he cannot escape the implications of what he does. Every institution or organization in society is involved in supporting or in altering the status quo, and he must be aware of which ones share his own aims and attitudes most fully. He must also have a clear understanding of what he hopes will be achieved in the realm of social change.

Another problem a student must face is the realization that whatever *his* aims are for social change, they may not coincide with those of the community he is working with. In this case – or even if his aims and those of the community do coincide – he must be prepared to accept a back seat role in helping to effect them. It is vitally important that the attitude of social paternalism that was prevalent during the 60's is not transformed into a new attitude of political paternalism.

An important step toward making the volunteers' work successful in the end is their own sensitivity to the real needs of the community they work with. This involves an awareness of the implications of their actions in that community; it involves an awareness of the direction in which the community is moving; it also involves a depth of human understanding and empathy. No one can really teach a person how to be a good community worker, any more than he can teach a person how to be a good human being. We all learn by experience, and our success or failure depends largely on our ability to remain open and flexible.

The material that follows, then, is not a prescriptive teaching manual; it is a gathering of ideas, facts, and suggestions. It is designed to encourage an attitude of openness and flexibility in setting up projects and

in responding to the ensuing experiences. Perhaps it will ease the shock of entry into community work and speed the process of learning and evolving. It is hoped that each student who confronts this material will derive from it a knowledge of the enormity of the task that awaits him and an awareness of the need for establishing high personal standards for success. It is also hoped that the rich emotional rewards that can come from community work will not be buried in the morass of details.

2 what it's all about

What goes into a student volunteer project? Energy. Imagination. A desire to improve the world. Hard work. All these, certainly, but much more is required as well.

This chapter is designed to illustrate the basic ingredients of a volunteer project. Illustrate, not talk about. The rest of the manual talks about volunteering, but the best way to understand what it's really about—next to doing it—is to look at some actual case histories.

The three case histories selected for this chapter illustrate different kinds of volunteering activities: inner-city tutoring, aid to migrant workers, and "senior power." The first and last have an urban setting, the other has a rural setting, but most of what occurs in the projects could take place anywhere in the country. What's important is what the students, in cooperation with the community, actually do—and how they go about doing it.

Notice in each case study that two sets of *needs* must be identified before a project can be fully realized: those of the community, and those of the students. Unless *both* sets of needs are recognized and taken into account, the project has little chance of success. As for identifying the students' needs, that is usually a matter of examining your own conscience and drives. Identifying the needs of the community is another matter. Any student who thinks he knows what those needs are and so informs the community deserves the cold reception he will undoubtedly receive.

Once the needs of both groups are identified, the resources of the community as well as the University must be utilized. This process may involve an interview with a community leader, a general letter to all the faculty, joint meetings of students and community representatives, or something as simple as a walk through town. But another element is always required—one that students often fail to think about when they start a project—and that is time. Notice in all three cases studies that months and even years pass in the process of building the project.

Once a project is under way, other elements will soon become necessary. New volunteers will need to be recruited. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as word-of-mouth, letters to in-coming freshman, and notices read in class or at assemblies. The new volunteers must be given some kind of orientation or training, a process that may involve briefing sessions, group discussions with members of the community, role-playing sessions, and apprentice sessions. Ways must be found to

provide volunteers with on the job supervision and back-up support; ways must also be found to evaluate both the performance of individual volunteers and the project as a whole. The problem of transportation may become critical with the addition of volunteers, and along with it, the problem of insuring vehicles. The volunteers themselves should probably be insured against possible tort claims. And, of course, the inevitable problem of raising money to support the whole operation . . .

But rather than extract all these "ingredients" and subject them to critical analysis, let us illustrate them with real people operating in real situations. Perhaps in this way, the human rewards of a project—as well as the problems—will become apparent. The rest of the manual is reserved for analysis.

The Elmwood Court Educational Project

Elmwood Court is one of the city's several housing projects. It is bare and dirty, and the four-story buildings surround a courtyard of cracked asphalt, broken glass, and deteriorating benches. The largest apartments have five rooms, but such quarters hold families of eight or ten people. The kids who live here—well over 500 of them—attend overcrowded schools, shoot pool at the settlement houses, fill the reform schools, and often graduate to the state prisons and mental hospitals.

Elmwood Court is a mile from campus, and Larry C. observes it regularly as he walks to and from Building #8, Apt. 14. Nine-year-old Butchy lives there, and Larry has been tutoring him in math and reading for well over a year. These tutoring sessions are a very important part of Butchy's life, not because he has learned to read any better, but because Larry is his friend. Butchy is also an important person in Larry's life. However, Larry has lately begun to feel the incongruity of concentrating all of his energy on tutoring without confronting the more serious problems of an inadequate school system—physical deterioration of buildings, over-crowding, lack of necessary funds, a generally rigid and unimaginative teaching staff, and lack of parental involvement in decisions that concern the school. Any patching up that Larry might do on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons can be undone on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Somehow there must be a better way to help Butchy—and also the 500 or so other kids in Elmwood Court whose expectations for a future in our education-oriented society are being shaped by their school experiences.

These are the frustrations that Larry tries to explain to Professor R., the faculty sponsor of the East Campus Tutoring Program (ECTP). This is not the first time that tutors in the project have expressed this concern. And it is not that Professor R. is insensitive to the dilemma. Nevertheless, he does not believe that the answer lies within ECTP. As he has pointed out before, it is important to keep in mind that tutoring is a service that the Elmwood Court residents have indicated they want from

students. Considering the long history of ECTF in that community and the existing network of relationships that have been carefully developed around the program, Professor R. thinks that it would be unwise to shift the program's focus. Furthermore, tutoring is an excellent initial experience for students interested in becoming involved in volunteer activities. It exposes them to the realities of poverty, and at the same time it is not a role that makes excess demands on them in terms of skills, leadership, time commitment, and past experience. Professor R. suggests that Larry explore the possibilities of developing a new course of action that will be an outgrowth of community interest and concern; in turn, Professor R. will look into ways that the University might play a supportive role.

Larry continues to spend Tuesday and Thursday afternoons tutoring Butchy. But on Thursday evenings, he and several other tutors meet informally with a small group of parents they know in the housing project. These are people who are involved in the tutoring project and seem interested in understanding the dynamics of the school system and in the possibility of changing it. After several weeks of discussion, Larry decides to hold an open community meeting—both to expand the core groups and to benefit from the thinking of other community members.

The meeting is scheduled for 7:30 Tuesday evening in the project's Drop-In Center. Only three new people come. Not only does Larry fail to notice that his meeting conflicts with a Tenant Council meeting, but he neglects to put the responsibility for organizing the meeting in the hands of project residents.

Profiting from these mistakes, Larry encourages the parents of his core group to help him organize another meeting. Through the use of flyers and word-of-mouth advertising, the second general meeting has a much larger turnout than is expected. The community is visibly concerned; however, since many conflicting opinions are represented, deciding on a common course of action is not easy. The most serious reservations hinge on putting time and energy (as well as faith) into a plan whose success may well depend on students. It is one thing for students to conduct a tutoring program in the housing project; it is another for them to promote activities which might well have consequences that they, as outsiders, would not have to face—or even know how to face.

The meeting ends with a suggestion that whatever course of action evolves, it should be given a base of legitimacy by establishing formal ties with the University. The leadership that begins to coalesce around the "schools issue" recommends that a meeting be scheduled between members of the University Administration having the authority to commit the university's resources to a joint University-community endeavor, and members of what is now known as Parents Concerned About Education.

Knowing that the East Campus Tutoring Program has the sanction of the University, Larry and his fellow tutors decide to build on contacts already established through that Program. Professor R. is willing to

help, and following his suggestion, Larry and his friends begin to lay the groundwork. Their immediate aim is to help the University to understand and appreciate the concerns and the goals of the newly formed coalition of parents. They talk with the Dean of Students, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Assistant to the President for Community Affairs, as well as interested faculty members and heads of departments. A joint meeting is eventually arranged for the purpose of exploring ways that the University might support the community efforts.

During this meeting, the residents of Elmwood Court are eloquent in expressing their concerns about the state of the public schools in their area. University representatives are not only impressed by this acute analysis of the situation, but are also captured by the possibilities of the role the University might play in an attempt to bring about meaningful change. As a result of the discussion, the University arranges for a meeting the following week—the first of many—that also includes teachers from the area's elementary and high schools.

In all, it takes months of planning to work out the details, and by the end of the year, many problems are far from resolved. However, the University does institute a weekly seminar on Changing Education in the Cities—one that includes residents of Elmwood Court, receptive teachers from the public schools of the district, and student participants in the East Campus Tutoring Project. The aim of the seminar is to explore alternative creative-learning environments—what they imply and how they might be achieved. On a more practival level, the seminar prepares the participants to work together in a classroom situation, the student volunteers and the parents from Elmwood Court functioning as aides to the classroom teachers.

Viewed in relation to the whole American School System, the seminar is only a small beginning, but for all the people involved, its implications are profound. It represents a commitment on behalf of the University, it provides the parents of Elmwood Court with paraprofessional teaching skills and an opportunity to use them, and it gives the students an opportunity to act as a catalyst in uniting the two groups. On Tuesdays and Thursdays when Larry walks to Elmwood Court for his tutoring sessions, he knows that Butchy and his friends have a better chance of a decent future.

The "Map" Story

During the month of June, cars and trucks with license plates from Texas, Florida, and other Southern states begin to appear in the small Midwestern town where Judy N. lives. For Judy, the arrival of these cars and trucks marks the beginning of summer, for they are filled with migrant workers who harvest the cash crops of asparagus, strawberries, cucumbers, tomatoes, and other table vegatables grown in the area. The

migrants remain until October when they mysteriously disappear for the winter months.

As she is growing up, Judy takes the migrants for granted. They live in a camping area outside of town, where Judy's mother forbids her ever to go. Occasionally she sees one or two of them in town at a store, but they look different. Some speak a foreign language, and some speak English with an accent.

Once or twice during Judy's high school years, a social agency distributes literature and tries to recruit student volunteers to work with small children at the migrants' camp. Judy contributes some of her allowance, but is always too busy during the summer to help personally. It is not until her sophomore year in college that Judy takes a sociology seminar called "The Forgotten Poor" and awakens to the plight of the migrant workers.

In the seminar, Judy learns that 80% of the migrant workers in the area speak only Spanish—or more accurately, a language of their own made up of Spanish and broken English. Although nearly all are American citizens, they have Mexican or Puerto Rican backgrounds. They move with the crops and are never in an area long enough to qualify for welfare or unemployment insurance, even though their annual income of $1,800 to 2,000 would normally allow them to file a claim. Besides, their language barrier makes it difficult for them to communicate their needs to most "outsiders" not to mention a governmental agency. With few exceptions, the migrant families find themselves locked into a cycle of poverty and deprivation.

As part of her course, Judy becomes involved in a research project concerned with the educational opportunities open to the children of migrant workers. Because she has taken four years of Spanish, Judy is invaluable on field trips to the migrants' camp. She learns that some of the children have been enrolled in local schools, but that none of them are ever able to stay in one area long enough to benefit from the experience. Besides, none of the schools along the migrant route provide bi-lingual instruction. The "migs"—as the migrant children are called by their English-speaking peers—are isolated and generally ignored. As one sympathetic teacher observed, not much can be done when you have them only for a month or so and cannot even speak their language.

As a result of the seminar, Judy and a few of her classmates decide that something must be done to help the children of migrants break the cycle of poverty into which they are born. The main problem, however, is that the migrants are in the area of the College for only a month to five weeks each year after the beginning of the fall term. No tutoring project could be of much use. Besides, only a few students other than Judy speak enough Spanish to communicate with the children. Some other resolution is clearly needed.

At the suggestion of Judy's seminar instructor, a meeting is arranged between interested students and leaders of the migrant workers. The students quickly learn from this experience that the primary needs of

the migrants lie in the areas of legal aid and medicine. Tutoring would be helpful, perhaps, but the workers have seen such projects start up and fold too often to exhibit much interest in them.

As a result of this meeting and a few others both on campus and at the migrant camp, Judy and her fellow students begin a program called MAP (Migrant Action Program). Although the goal of starting a tutoring project is not abandoned, the immediate aim of the group is to raise money both for legal aid and research, and for medical services.

The fund-raising campaign begins modestly with a letter to all faculty and administrative offices on campus. Some money trickles in, but more important, a few letters include offers of help. Through the Student Affairs Office, a room with desks and a telephone is turned over to MAP. The Alumni Office offers its mailing list for another fund-raising letter, and Professor S. of the Government Department suggests that he can act as a liaison for law and medical students at the State University. What begins as a simple fund-raising campaign turns into a recruitment campaign, and gradually the resources of Judy's College, the community, and the State University are tapped for an all-out effort to aid the migrant workers.

During her last two years at college, Judy sees MAP expand and develop a number of far-reaching projects. Volunteers are recruited from the College and local communities to run a summer day care center for migrant children below the age of six. The volunteers are trained and supervised by a professor in the Education Department, and they use bi-lingual learning materials donated by a PTA group. Through the use of games and such special learning devices, they encourage the children to develop a sense of exploration and creativity.

Law students from the State University open a bi-lingual legal assistance center in the basement of a church. With the assistance of undergraduate volunteers they launch a campaign to convince the State legislature to expand its welfare program to include temporary residents, and during the evening when workers are free, they spend time at the campsite explaining how the Social Security System works, and how to keep records for income tax deductions. They also teach seminars in basic contract obligations, comparative shopping, and time-payments purchasing.

A small group of medical students under the direction of a paid, public health nurse operates a medical van that circulates from camp to camp. The students provide basic health services—innoculations, x-rays, and first aid. They also provide information on subjects such as family planning, nutrition, and dental care. The money to support this June-to-October operation is raised largely by the undergraduates' winter fund-raising campaign.

Other projects are also planned, such as a bi-lingual summer school to help migrant teenagers and young adults earn a high school equivalency degree, and athletic and enrichment activities using the facilities of the college.

There are difficulties, however. Many of the students do not remain in the area during the summer months and therefore lack any real knowledge of the migrant problems, or any real commitment to solving them. This difficulty is compounded by a growing sense of racial pride among the Chicano migrants which tends to separate them from their fellow white workers – not to mention the college students.

There is also the problem of sustaining any activities over the winter months from November to May. Volunteers tend to develop other interests, and the personal ties that sustain any volunteer effort are inevitably severed when the crops are harvested and the migrants move on. For this reason, the leaders of MAP discover that they have to begin again from almost nothing every spring.

The MAP program continues, however, and begins to gather its small victories. A member of the State Legislature develops an interest in the plight of the migrant workers and introduces legislation to improve their living conditions and hourly wage. A group of migrant workers organizes and forces a particularly large employer to improve his housing units. Individual migrant workers see the possibility of breaking their cycle of poverty and begin working toward that goal.

As for Judy, the experience of working with the migrants leads to graduate work involving minority groups – and possibly a future career in that field.

The Golden Years

For Bob, it is a matter of common sense. As a second semester sophomore at a small liberal arts college, he is eager to validate his reasons for concentrating on welfare problems. His choice of concentration was predicated on a basic concern for other people, but the formal academic structure of required courses threatens to divorce him from the very people he wants to serve. There are no field service opportunities available, because the option of concentrating in the area of welfare is relatively new to the Sociology Department. Bob recognizes the possibility of working with the existing student volunteer program, but its main function is tutoring neighborhood children. While such activities meet the specific needs of one segment of the community, Bob feels restricted already by a general emphasis on youth in America. Living on campus with members of his own age group further isolates Bob from the world beyond the boundaries of the campus.

Bob's need to learn his vocation by living it does not vanish because he cannot participate for credit in the area of welfare. He complains to Jim F., his instructor in Urban Education, about the protective stance the College assumes in matters of social change. Jim suggests various community agencies that serve an urban population, but Bob questions their professional approach and their lack of flexibility in using student volunteers. He points out that community agencies, because of public

relations, must steer away from the political ramifications of the welfare movement. To import a student idealist, he claims, would lead them to expect an explosion.

Jim knows better, and suggests that Bob contact the Inner-City Center, which sponsors a volunteer program during the summer months. The program is designed to help people who are generally powerless by themselves to form groups and work together toward common goals. Having served as an advisor to the program, Jim explains that the exchange of power from Have's to Have-Not's is brought about by various kinds of groups. The Inner-City program encourages a volunteer's awareness of a responsiveness to the world in which he lives. What particularly excites Bob about Jim's description is the cross-section of volunteers that the program attracts from across the country.

For seven weeks between his sophomore and junior years, Bob works for the Inner-City Center helping to form neighborhood groups. As the groups begin to function, Bob recognizes that the most severely disenfranchised members are the aged. Dispossessed by death or sometimes by their own children, left alone in shifting neighborhoods, they become victims of a covert policy of social Darwinism. Bob has read and debated the causes of the Great Depression in America, but he is under the impression that it ended in the late 30's. He is now confronting its lingering effects. What his texts fail to provide is an adequate description of the psychological consequences of this economic disaster. The aged members of Bob's recently enlarged world have physically survived a half century of pain, deprivation, and destruction. Brought up to believe in the American Dream and its gold-paved streets, they exist now in the nightmare of their "golden" years. In each neighborhood, Bob meets the victims of purse snatchers, low pension checks (or none at all), Social [in] Security payments, and inflation.

When the summer volunteer program ends, Bob returns home with first-hand accounts of soup lines at St. Francis Chapel populated by senior citizens; a man who purchases dog food because he cannot afford hamburger; and early morning encounters with a bearded eighty-year-old man who mumbles prayers as he rummages through half-filled cans of garbage. How, Bob asks, can we abandon so many for so long?

When classes resume in September, Bob spends his afternoons at the Inner-City Center working with senior citizen groups that evolved during the summer. He scoffs at the idea that he is involved with "geriatrics"—a stereotyped term that conjures up images of half-filled bed pans. The Seniors that Bob works with are active, energetic, and dedicated to regaining the rights that once were theirs as citizens. Here truly is Senior Power, and whatever pity Bob may once have brought to the Center is effectively dispelled the day he forgets the name of a goldenager he had met during the summer. The man shakes Bob's hand, smiles, and remarks, "You know Bob, loss of memory is one of the first signs of senility."

The Senior Citizens Action Group is the most active one at the Center. Its main goals are rate reductions for public utilities, and an increase in Social Security benefits. Bob learns that while poverty is a daily companion of the aged, they are even more threatened by a loss of contact with other people. Thus, the telephone is extremely important as a means of recreation and protection. The senior citizens in the Action Group spend an average of 15% of their monthly income on the telephone. For them, it is not a utility; it is a necessity.

Throughout the year, Bob works primarily in a supportive role. While all decisions are made by the Action Group, Bob's advice is readily sought because of his growing contact with all segments of the community, especially in academic and civic areas. Through his dedication and his knowledge of senior citizen problems, Bob establishes a bond of trust with the Action Group, and he is encouraged to recruit more college students into the movement.

To Bob this invitation is a necessary prerequisite to committing himself to a larger volunteer role. He has to have credibility in the community *before* he can advertise his work as a legitimate volunteer experience. With the invitation, Bob is qualified to relate both to the needs of the senior citizens and to the needs of socially conscious undergraduates. During the year, Bob serves both as a liaison between the campus and the Senior Citizens Action Group, and as a resource person for all joint activities. Two of the activities are researching Social Security legislation and circulating petitions to reduce the monthly telephone rate for senior citizens.

As a result of Bob's efforts, the Sociology Department begins to consider way of granting academic credit for work in the community. Such decisions evolve slowly, but for the students who spend time working with "old people" at the Inner-City Center, results are more immediate. They are drawn into the community, derive a sense of its totality, and grow angry when they encounter the attitude that senior citizens are a disposable segment of society. They also grow angry when they see what has happened to the myth of the American Dream, and they want to work to make it more of a reality. For Bob, the experience of working at the Center is extra-cirricular, but without it, his concentration on welfare problems would have been pure theory.

3 putting it together

Communities have many needs and students have many capabilities, but in order to provide volunteer assistance that is relevant and meaningful, both groups must give adequate time to prepare the foundation of a social action project. A large number of variables is involved in this process, but a few basic elements should be stressed. For the purpose of clarity, these will be categorized in the following pages, but they do not constitute a timetable of action. They are rather interrelated processes that can be juxtaposed in your total planning effort.

Much of the initial preparation for a project depends on how much has already been done in the area. It depends on whether your basic interest is the outgrowth of a general concern about existing social problems and a desire to be in some way a part of the solution; whether it is an extension of past involvement in social actions; or whether it evolves from a class project or a rap session with a group of friends. Sometimes a project gets started because a group of students finds a need in the community and then finds the resources on campus to help out. At other times students have a particular service or skill to offer and then find a community group that could use it. Whether the egg or the chicken comes first hardly matters as long as the project gets started.

What follows is an outline of the basic elements involved in the development of a social action project. The outline should be useful at any point in the development, and it should assist you in visualizing at once the three main areas of concern. These are:

- Knowing the community in which you hope to work
- Knowing the range of resources available to you
- Involving appropriate people in all stages of the project.

Knowing the Community

Obviously, before you can help a community you have to be familiar with it—who lives there, what languages are spoken, what religious or ethnic group predominates, what the living conditions and the community morale are like. In order to develop this sense of the community's self-image and a feeling for the problems as the community itself sees them, it would be helpful for you to construct a community profile. This can be done by observing the needs of the community, its leader-

ship, its social groupings, the community organizations that attempt to meet its needs, and even the demography of the area. This knowledge will assist you in determining what your contribution to the community might be and how it should evolve.

The Needs

As you acquire knowledge about a community, you should develop a sense of the heirarchy of needs *as the community itself perceives them.* Deciding what constitutes a valid need is not easy, however. It is dangerous to presuppose that a shared set of values and a common world view exist between the students developing the project and the residents of the community. In your opinion a tenants' union or a workshop in family planning is desperately needed, but unless the people themselves happen to agree, any attempt to move in these directions will probably end up in failure—and resentment. An exciting project with great potential—organizing rural poor in Kentucky—failed recently because the students had begun at a level beyond the readiness of the community to accept. In such an instance, it is wise to desist entirely, or be willing to commit considerable time developing a grassroots interest and support.

It may also be difficult to determine what services are actually wanted. A community may not trust students sufficiently to be frank and open. For that matter, certain individuals may even have trouble communicating their thoughts beyond a general dissatisfaction with social conditions. If this is the case, choosing the kind of project to put together may ultimately depend upon an intuitive sense of what the community wants and will accept.

Community Leadership

A crucial element to be considered in becoming acquainted with a community is its leadership. An obvious beginning is to find out who these leaders are and how they obtained their legitimacy. You should learn whether the leadership is cohesive and united in its goals or divided into factions. If you find that factions exist, you must confront the decision as to which group to work for, and what problems this choice could conceivably cause. You must also decide what changes might affect the relationship of these factions to one another, and whether you will feel comfortable being an active part of the dynamics that brings about these changes.

A well organized community with its own leadership is likely to know exactly what it wants from you, and this may mean a narrow, subordinate role within the framework of the larger community effort. For example, the residents of a certain inner-city community in an Eastern, college-

laden area have become particularly sensitive to their being used as objects of research papers and as a learning experience for students interested in "social reform." Consequently, students wishing to participate in social action programs in that area must be careful to defer to community leadership and to play a back-seat role in terms of visibility.

If the community in which you are planning to work is poorly organized, you may be forced initially to assume the leadership in the planning and development of your project. If so, the project itself may serve as a catalyst in developing leadership within the community, and it may provide the impetus for greater participation on the part of all the residents. In such a case, you must also think carefully about who will ultimately control the project and its resources. No project that is run entirely by students for a long time is going to be effective in bringing about permanent change. If the project is not eventually controlled by the community, your efforts will have no lasting effect. A seemingly successful student-run recreation program conducted in a poor section of a Midwestern college town recently folded after six years of operation. Since it had been run competently by the students, the residents of the area felt no need to become involved in it. The program gradually acquired the image of "babysitting," and when the students tried to shift its focus and involve the community, they were met with resistance and even hostility.

Social Groupings

The number of social organizations in a community often indicates its general vitality. People who participate in social activities have a different set of priorities and different attitudes about their abilities to effect change than those who live in a community that is fragmented and withdrawn. Social organizations might include teen clubs and drop-in centers, senior citizen groups, church programs and church-related organizations (Knights of Columbus, DeMolay, Rainbow Girls), civic groups, business clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions), and fraternal organizations (Elks, Odd Fellows and even local gangs). It is possible that one or more of these groups will be engaged in a social service activity that you may wish to assist.

Organizations and Programs Which Service the Community's Needs

If your university is located in an urban setting, community problems are likely to be massive, and a variety of groups may have been formed already in an attempt to meet them. If your university is located in a small town, fewer agencies may exist, but they probably could use assistance. In rural areas, the response to social problems is often more

direct and human than in urban areas; yet there may be a subtle, but strong resistance to creating new ways of dealing with these problems.

Finding out what services already operate in your area will prevent duplication of effort and help you to understand what the range of responses to community problems has been. Built into your survey of existing services should be a continuous evaluation of their success and their potential as measured against the needs they have been designed to meet. Gathering this information may involve a trip to the Town or City Hall, as well as the Student Activities Office in the Union. It is possible that a directory of community services is available from a local group such as the United Fund Office; however, a checklist is no substitute for personal examination. A tutoring program, for example, may turn out to be an attempt to deal with an entire educational system, or it may be an irregularly staffed, one-to-one activity. It could be structured or unstructured, and it could have as its primary concern an educational goal or the interpersonal relationships that evolve out of the tutoring process.

Other possible sources of firsthand information about community activities are churches, hospitals and public health clinics, tenant organizations, settlement houses, civil rights organizations, the Model Cities Offices, and the central office of the local Community Action Program (CAP). Talking with people in such organizations often uncovers small, informal projects involving only one or two persons—projects that might easily expand in focus and scope with the support of student volunteers.

It cannot be stressed too often that becoming acquainted with community activities and community leaders is the key factor in making your project a viable part of the community it is designed to serve. Only by building upon this background of knowledge will your project have any chance of lasting relevance.

The Demography

Not too much time should be spent searching out this kind of information, but often it can provide in-depth clues to the nature of a community—clues that might otherwise be missed entirely. For example, you could check to see how many policemen are assigned to the area at different hours, how often trash is collected, and how many firestations are located nearby. Such details provide a clear indication of how much importance the various branches of the City Government place on the area. Similarly, a quick check to see how many stores are owned by residents of the area will give you an indication of its all-important economic base.

Knowing the Range of Resources Available to You

A successful volunteer project needs many resources to provide a broad base of support. These may be found both on campus and in the community at large.

Campus Resources

Campus resources generally provide the support for a project. To tap these resources, it may be helpful to find an "advocate" within the University Administration: the Dean of Students, the Assistant to the President for Community Affairs, the Vice President of the University, or the Dean of Undergraduate Affairs, to name a few. Such an individual can often provide ideas and open many doors that would otherwise be closed to you.

Members of the faculty, staff, and administration may already be involved in community action, and they may be willing to act as general consultants in the areas of their expertise, or as advisors to specific projects. Some may be interested in participating on a continuing basis as members of a steering committee. Many projects have been sustained within a university because an advisory committee was formed of students and representatives of the community and University. Such a committee not only provides useful advice and guidance to volunteers, but its close involvement and support tends to strengthen a project in both areas. Remember that it is important to keep the University members involved by seeking their advice, and by including them in informal rap sessions.

Students also represent a resource. Not only does a project depend on their participation, but it will probably be enriched by their previous experience in social action activities. Their contribution or insight and awareness from a peer perspective should enhance a project's chance for success.

The facilities and programs of a university represent another possible area of resource. Your gym, pool, and playing fields may be available for general community use, or at least for individual students to use with community children, as well as the Library, Student Union, classrooms, and Computer Center. Activities such as films, plays, athletic events, and lectures may be another resource. Community children, accompanied by a volunteer leader, might be admitted free, or at least at a reduced rate. Such activities do not imply a general open-door policy for a community, but they are a resource that volunteers should consider.

Community Resources

During your visits to various community groups to determine needs, you should try to locate resources to assist in the development of your

project. Are the people you meet willing to come on campus and talk to groups of students about the community? Are they willing to assist in the designing of the project? Will they provide supervision and feedback? What facilities are available – a community library, health clinic, church, or play ground?

Learning how to locate and procure the use of campus and community resources can be as crucial to the success of a project as learning to know the community.

Involving Appropriate People in all Stages of the Project

Planning a project is a complex process, and it must be done carefully. Being socially concerned, shaping an idea, knowing a community, and involving appropriate people are all part of the process. Whatever step occurs first – whether it is the development of a project plan, the recognition of a social need, a survey of the community, the establishment of community ties, or the discovery of support within the University Administration – depends largely on circumstances and timing.

Eventually, though, campus and community groups must join in the planning process. If the community group has previously had a negative experience with student volunteers, the first planning session can provide an opportunity to work out its concerns about student commitment and responsibility. For their own part, students should understand clearly what duties they will be responsible for, how much time will be required of them, and what precise goals are projected.

It should go without saying that if a community is not involved in the planning of its own projects, the insensitivity of the student volunteers will be bitterly resented. Furthermore, community presence in the planning stages of a project will give it the initial stability it needs. Community groups or agencies can also provide suggestions, guidance, and training – all of which are necessary to develop and sustain a project.

Getting Started

Inevitably a certain amount of administrative work is necessary to get a project off the ground. In the very beginning, this may involve a room in a dorm, the Union Coffee Shop, and a loose leaf notebook – with plenty of paper and index tabs. As ideas evolve, they should be carefully recorded, because they constitute an important part of your project "log." At later stages of development, the information may be needed to resolve a conflict or re-establish goals.

During the initial phase of a project, you may operate successfully out of the dormitory room and Coffee Shop, but eventually you will need

some kind of official space within the University. A desk in the Chapel or the Student Activities Office will do as a start—any place where a phone can be installed and the looseleaf notebook transferred into permanent files.

A group of students in California developed a successful health care project for migrant workers with only a few posters and the basement of a church. Other students in Rhode Island used a local storefront to establish a music workshop for children in an inner-city area. What is important in both of these cases is that the fixed address provided a degree of visibility and official sanction. This does not mean that a project should become part of the "establishment," but an address does help to establish credibility when you approach anyone for assistance or advice.

A timetable or plan of action is also important. It is not easy with just a few people to do all the work necessary to develop a successful volunteer project. It takes time to locate resources on campus. It takes time to assess community needs and establish community relationships. It takes even longer to arrange meetings with campus and community groups and to put together a workable project. The past experience of students who have initiated volunteer projects shows that at least four to six weeks of pre-planning are required before one can be fully in operation.

A detailed plan might include some of the following items:

1. A statement of goals.
   Very useful when it comes to evaluating the success of a project at the end of the year. Also useful for defining the roles of individual volunteers, and establishing credibility in the community.
2. An initial timetable.
   How long it will take to recruit, train, and place volunteers; how long it will take to locate and secure needed facilities; when you will hold orientation and training sessions for volunteers; how long orientation and training will last; and how much time you will need to raise funds.
3. A project timetable.
   When the project will start; how often volunteers will be needed (daily, weekly, or monthly); and what hours of the day or evening volunteers will be needed.
4. A place to operate.
   The most successful projects usually find some facility in the community as well as on campus. In choosing your site in the community, be sure that you do not encroach on the "territory" of another volunteer project.

In working out such details and timetables, be careful not to substitute planning for action. All too often groups fall into a malady called "grooving on the process." This involves being so stimulated by the dynamics that occur during a planning session that no energy is left over for

actually carrying out the project.

Remember too, that in the very early stages of a project you should make provision for two vital ingredients: continuity and termination. Any project worth starting is worth continuing until its objectives are met. If the process is to take a year or several years, you must lay the groundwork for its continuity, particularly in the area of organization. And any project worth starting should also aim for the elimination of the need that occasioned it – and hence its own termination.

4 keeping it together

Any volunteering effort can sustain itself for awhile on little more than enthusiasm, but as the weeks and months pass, something more is needed. Some volunteers begin to lose interest and fail to show up for their appointments. New volunteers must be found. As more is known about the needs of the community and the needs of the volunteers themselves, more extensive training techniques and more sensitive follow-up evaluations are required. Lack of adequate transportation may prevent expansion, and always the need for money gnaws at the vital parts of the project.

These signs of stress mark the end of a project's period of adolescence and its need for assuming the responsibilities of maturity. This does not mean that initial enthusiasm has to be replaced with the dull routine of an established operation. It does mean that various functions of the operation need to be analyzed separately and then altered and improved according to the ultimate goals of the whole project. Only through self-study and improvement can initial enthusiasm and momentum be sustained.

This chapter isolates the usual functions of a volunteer effort, discusses the need for each, and suggests ways they may be implemented or improved. The purpose of the discussion is not to emphasize any particular function at the expense of any other; a project's success depends on the strength and assimilation of all its parts. A strong recruitment campaign, for example, is worse than useless if it is not supported by an equally strong training program. In adapting this chapter to your own needs, do not lose sight of the forest for the trees.

Recruitment

Recruitment itself is a rather mystical process. You have to explore every possibility and provide continuous visibility for a project. Too much publicity can be dangerous. If you push too hard, people will react negatively to the hard sell. The main objective is to develop an accumulative effect. Some students will respond immediately, but others may need to hear the message for a semester or more before taking action. It is more important that students become involved only when they are truly and fully motivated to do so. No one should be cajoled into volunteering. For this reason, it is best just to keep the message

alive and wait for people to come to you.

Word-of-mouth is generally the first technique used to recruit volunteers for a project. Sometimes it is the only one needed. It is often more effective than posters or radio spots because no one can communicate enthusiasm more than the volunteer himself in a one-to-one discussion. But as a project expands, more volunteers with different skills and backgrounds must be found. The word-of-mouth technique is directed primarily at people the volunteers already know or meet in accustomed places (the student union, dining halls, rap-sessions), and it often proves inadequate when it comes to finding people with different backgrounds and interests.

A fully developed recruitment program requires imagination, time, and a diversity of skills. It also requires a conviction on the part of those doing the work that their efforts are essential to the success of the whole project, and that the project itself is very important. Without such conviction, an advertising campaign can sound as hollow as an advertisement for a laundry detergent.

Remember too, that any form of recruitment also advertises your project. For this reason, every appeal should be aimed not only at the volunteer, but also at the University and the community you serve. Any recruitment campaign is an exercise in public relations.

Some of the more common techniques used in volunteer recruitment are:

Posters

Often printed at little or no cost through a campus print-shop or art studio. Artists may donate their talents in designing them. No poster, however can be expected to last on a busy bulletin board. Either it is torn down to make way for others, or it ends up as a decoration in someone's room. Posters should be kept simple: a design, picture, or phrase that will catch the eye, a brief description of the project, and a telephone number or person to contact for more information.

Newspapers

Free space is usually available at least in campus and underground papers. A usually successful technique is to run your own "Help Wanted" column listing specific vacancies, or try a series of personals. For example: "Retarded Girl, aged 10, needs tutor-companion. Contact (name of your office)." Since most university newspapers are business operations and therefore cost conscious, the amount of free space may be limited. If so, you can request a news story on your project—one that could develop into a series of articles as the project develops. It is always a good idea to recruit journalism students to work as volunteers for your project. They can write stories and news releases for you, and help get them published, especially if they also work for the campus paper.

Radio

Free spots are often available on campus and local stations. In taping the spots (usually one minute), be innovative. Try dramatic scenes, street interviews, music—but always use the same by-line at the end, including your name and telephone number. More coverage may be obtained by requesting an interview on a regular talk-show (including local television).

Letters, Flyers, and Newsletters

Mailing lists of faculty and students (including incoming freshmen) are usually available in the form of pre-printed, gummed labels. A printed announcement of your activities together with a request for volunteers may thus be circulated to the entire University (free, by campus mail). One large Eastern university recently sent such an announcement to its 1,200 faculty members requesting that it be read in their classes. As an afterthought, a plea for funds was included, and within two weeks, its budget for the entire year was met.

Flyers may be circulated in the Union at lunchtime—or dropped by airplane at a football rally! Newsletters circulated to other campus organizations and departments are another method of maintaining constant visibility.

Agency Fairs

Community agencies are invited to set up booths manned by their representatives who distribute literature and give first hand information about volunteer jobs in the community. Such fairs are held on campus usually on a weekend during the first few weeks of each school year. The attractions common to all fairs draw the crowds. Proceeds can go to the campus volunteer program or to community projects. A small university recently netted $2000 in an afternoon, enough money to run all of its projects for a year.

Volunteer Day

Community agencies and projects again come onto campus, but this time the emphasis is on information sharing. Several rooms in the Student Union are reserved for a day, or tables can be set up on the lawn. Representatives from different agencies are available to discuss projects and disseminate information. Films and slides are often shown.

Volunteer Night

Instead of an all-day affair, arrange for an evening program in one of the residence halls. Again, agency personnel attend and discuss their programs. A large urban university volunteer program sponsored such a night its first month of operation and attracted 300 students. This recruitment technique proved so successful it scheduled a Volunteer Night in a different residence hall each

month for the rest of the year. Project coordinators and other representatives from the Student Volunteer Office should also be present at any of these on-campus recruitment programs. They can introduce speakers, discuss the University's involvement with the project, and (most important) pass around sign-up sheets and application forms.

Speakers, rap-sessions, and special techniques

Speakers at freshman orientation sessions or general campus rallys can be effective if their message is kept short and crisp. A more in-depth view of your project can be offered through rap-sessions. This technique is especially effective during freshman orientation week.

As for other special techniques of recruitment, the only limit is your imagination. One group, for example, uses street theater presentations; another attracts volunteers by using live models in the showcase of the campus store to illustrate various service activities.

There are problems involved in a recruitment campaign, however, and they cannot be emphasized too strongly. A flashy technique of advertising or a falsely glamorous view of your project may attract volunteers, but these sudden converts may flee the moment they discover how much hard work is required. A hard-sell approach may also provide immediate results, but students with the strongest commitment and lasting power generally need time to develop their interest. A continuous but low-key approach may best attract such students. And finally, a successful recruitment campaign will be disasterous if the project itself is not fully prepared to use the new volunteers effectively. Make certain that you have actual assignments ready. There is nothing that will destroy your credibility more than a recruitment program that attracts one hundred volunteers for twenty-five available positions.

A most important element in preparing your recruitment campaign is to write up short descriptions of the jobs volunteers will actually perform. These job descriptions can be helpful during recruiting when students ask, "What will I be doing as a volunteer?" They may also serve as something to refer to in the eventuality a volunteer finds himself stuffing envelopes instead of canvassing the neighborhood in support of a proposed rent control program as he had been promised.

Orientation

Most recruitment programs are in effect "mini-orientations." Information disseminated via such programs gives enough data to arouse the interest of students to learn more about a particular project. If recruitment drives are for specific projects or even a single project, they should be closely followed by a detailed orientation meeting. Schedule a room at a convenient time and location—for example, in the Student Union or in a classroom after dinner. The meeting should be informally

structured so that students can learn more about the project, meet other interested students, talk with community representatives, ask questions, and share concerns. Key people from the University and community might be present to facilitate this exchange of information.

Such a meeting provides an ideal opportunity for you to share your concerns with the new volunteers. You can tell them how the project began, what steps were taken in its development, and what your expectations are for those who wish to become involved. This frank discussion helps to establish an atmosphere of trust which is essential to any lasting positive commitment on the part of a volunteer to the project.

Initial orientations can be short. At the end of the meeting people can sign up to work with the project, or better still, a second meeting can be scheduled in the community to give people a first-hand view of where they will be working. This second meeting gives students a chance to think over what they have learned and to decide whether or not they are really interested. Students willing to make a commitment to the project show up at a second orientation meeting. Apart from their exposure to the community, such a meeting provides students with a continued discussion from the previous session and a chance to discuss questions and concerns formulated between meetings. It also allows volunteers to meet new people from the community. In some cases students may decide they are not interested in the project after the second orientation. They should be encouraged to drop out at this point rather than later on after the community is counting on them.

All the questions raised during an orientation session are never fully answered until the volunteer begins working in the field, but the experience can at least help him to prepare his response. One inner-city project on the West coast nearly floundered because its volunteers started out with the glamorous notion of being community activists. They assumed that all they had to do was "educate" the community, and suddenly its repressive economic structure would be reformed. This naive and condescending attitude was met with open hostility, and the project itself was saved only by the intervention of a community leader who recognized the problem in time and "educated" the students. A good orientation program could have eliminated this problem before it ever had the chance to appear.

From the preceding chapter we have seen that an idea for a project grows out of an awareness and assessment of a perceived community need. Your response to this need should be based not only on your own training and experience, but also on your relationship with the community in question. All of this is part of the history of the project and shapes your commitment to it. Consequently, it should shape the expectations of every student who volunteers to work with you. In fairness to him, to the project, and to the community, you must be clear about these expectations. He should actively support the ultimate goals of the project and define the exact nature of his commitment in achieving them.

In short, orientation is more than an introduction to a project. It is a selection process as well. For this reason, a climate of openness and honesty must be created at the very outset so that together you and the interested student can decide whether or not he has the skills, sensitivity, temperament, energy, and time to sustain a commitment. Lack of commitment can cause a project to fail. This in turn can destroy the credibility of student volunteering in general and increase any feelings of distrust that may already exist between the University and the community.

Whether you are recruiting students for a number of different jobs with different agencies, for a number of specific projects, or for a single project, it is imperative that all potential volunteers be involved in an orientation program.

If your operation is serving in a placement capacity for local agencies, the selection process is particularly important. Each prospective volunteer should be allowed adequate time for an interview. He should be told about the various activities in which he might participate. He should also be encouraged to discuss his thoughts about the extent of his involvement, and he should be allowed to choose an area that will match his interests and needs. Before making this choice, he may wish to talk with other volunteers. Whatever time this process takes will be well spent if it helps to dispel any false notion that the student may have about your project, and if it helps you to place him where his motivation is sufficiently high to assure a sustained involvement.

Once a decision is reached, however, the student should be involved immediately either in a training session (if there is one) or in an actual job. An appointment with a fellow volunteer or participating community agency should be set up, and the telephone numbers of each party should be exchanged. It is also wise for you to follow up by telephone during the next day or two to make sure that no problems have come up to jeopardize the arrangement. Do not allow administrative inefficiency to destroy the enthusiasm of a volunteer.

Students with wide experience in volunteering usually make the best interviewers, but be sure that each one understands the full breadth of activities involved in volunteering. Care should also be taken to achieve uniformity of content in the interview itself. This can be done by holding an orientation/training session for the interviewers. Such sessions should not only provide information on the project but some discussion on interview techniques.

An orientation process, therefore, generally involves the following elements:

1. An initial orientation meeting to explain your project and meet interested students.
2. A second orientation meeting (perhaps held in the community) to provide an in-depth view of the project, to answer questions that may have arisen since the first meeting, and to allow prospective volunteers the opportunity of meeting people from the community.

3. A personal interview (preferably with an experienced volunteer) to resolve any problems that might have arisen on the part of the prospective volunteer, to make sure that he understands exactly what is expected of him, and to place him in a position that suits his needs and those of the community.
4. A follow-up check to make sure that the new volunteer has actually been placed in his assigned job or in a training program.

Training

Every project benefits if volunteers are properly trained. Not only do they acquire necessary skills, but they learn more about the project and their relationship to it. The content of training sessions will vary, of course, from project to project, but they all should aim at providing the volunteer with the specific skills necessary for his job, and with whatever additional information is necessary for him to operate effectively. A court volunteer, for example, should know exactly what he will do on the job (how to help people fill out forms); he should also be told about the court process as a whole (who does what, when, and how).

Although the content of the training sessions varies, what should be common to all of them is the inclusion of both the intangible and the concrete aspects of involvement in social action. The intangibles include those elements that affect a person's attitude about his role in the project and his relationship to people in the community. What is the volunteer's motivation beyond just wanting to help others? What is his self-image in relation to the project? What is his attitude toward the people he will be working with? Does he have a stereotyped image of "the poor"? What will his level of frustration be when he seems to be meeting resistance at every turn? What *should* it be? How does he confront social and political realities? How should he respond to the authority that community members give him?

The concrete aspects of training should obviously include the development of whatever specific skills are needed to make the project a success. A few less obvious areas of instruction might include communication skills and listening skills. It is important to learn how to hear what a person is really saying—to recognize his unspoken needs and hidden motives. Any project that involves meeting or talking with people—an inner-city tutoring project, a companionship project for the elderly, a hotline for drugs—would benefit from such instruction. The material could be presented at first through lectures, discussions, and readings, but eventually it should include some practice sessions with simulated games and role playing.

Student volunteer leaders, community people, and agency personnel should be involved in these training programs, with the community representatives and agency personnel acting either as participants or preferably as co-trainers. They should also be involved in structuring

the training sessions and in determining the kinds of skills they would like to see developed in the participating volunteers.

Students working on the same project or at the same agency should have the opportunity of meeting together at least once every two weeks to discuss their work, share problems, and evaluate their successes and failures. Resource people can be invited to act as group facilitators at these meetings, and community or agency personnel can be invited to provide specific information and share in the feedback process. Meetings can be held on campus or in the community. Most schools operating such discussion groups have found that alternating locations is successful.

These regular meetings give students the opportunity to share experiences with each other and with community people; they also provide the opportunity to discuss areas of concern that if left unaddressed might develop into unnecessary and unfounded ill feeling. At one such meeting recently a coed was about to announce her resignation when another volunteer discussed a problem he was having with one of his tutees. It was the same problem she was having with her little sister. The knowledge that she was not alone, that others were having similar difficulties, gave the coed the courage she needed to stay with the project. At another of these regular meetings, a group of volunteers complained that they were not receiving adequate support and supervision from the agency they were working with. In the discussion, their supervisor revealed his frustration in feeling that the volunteers did not want him around all the time. Both parties were holding diametrically opposed views of the same situation. The problem was solved in a matter of minutes after both groups had the opportunity to share their feelings.

Special attention should be given to the training of student leaders. More often than not projects are only as good as their leaders. It is therefore very important to have a special program that not only trains volunteer leaders but is constantly looking for prospective leaders. When student coordinators graduate, their projects should be able to continue to operate without them.

Seminars, lectures, and special labs can be developed for such training purposes. Project leaders and potential leaders should be invited to participate. Interested faculty members from the sociology, psychology, or education departments can provide assistance in developing these training sessions. Three main concepts should prevail, therefore, when you start thinking about training. They are: the base of training operations; the content of training sessions; and the time when training sessions are most important.

Community Based vs. University Based Training. The central questions here are who designs the training program, who carries it out, and who has the responsibility for it. Although some training programs are designed totally on campus and some totally in the community, the most effective programs are those where the design and operation are a joint venture between the university and community.

A pre-school tutoring project might involve teaching skills that some-

one from the School of Education would naturally provide (techniques of transfering audio perception into the abstract concepts of letters). However, people from the community could quickly identify words and ideas that children from their particular cultural backgrounds would have difficulty recognizing. By understanding this problem, volunteers could adapt their teaching techniques to fit the background of their pupils.

Formal vs. Informal Training. This depends largely on the material to be presented and the format used. A formal training session would have formalized objectives, a specific body of knowledge to impart and a curriculum developed for its dissemination. An informal session would not be structured, and it would have no specific information or knowledge to impart. Rather, it would be an informal sharing of ideas and experiences.

If you are presenting technical material (say, background information in housing law) a formal curriculum might need to be developed, complete with lectures and reading assignments. Such a presentation would hardly be necessary to train volunteers to coach a big brother baseball team. For the latter project, an informal rap session to determine the objectives of the project and who would do what to achieve them would be quite sufficient. For most projects, however, a combination of formal and informal sessions is often the best resolution. A training program for volunteers in a remedial reading tutoring project, for example, would require a few sessions of lectures and role-playing to develop the necessary skills. This formal training could profitably be followed up with a few informal sessions after the field work had begun to identify the kinds of problems volunteers actually encountered, and to decide how they might best be resolved.

Pre-service vs. In-service Training. Training sessions prior to actual work deal with what a volunteer needs to know before embarking on a project. This includes the development of necessary skills as well as the imparting of necessary information. In-service training helps refine skills, impart new knowledge, and examine work to date.

A complicated skill may require a great deal of pre-service training just to prepare the volunteer; it may also require elaborate techniques of in-service training to keep the skills sharp and the knowledge up-to-date. The pre-service skills can be imparted through a combination of formal and informal means; the in-service training is usually offered informally, either by on-the-job instruction or by regular discussion meetings for groups of volunteers involved in the same problems.

Supervision

Supervision is sometimes hard to distinguish from in-service training. Indeed, the two might well be joined through an apprenticeship program

in which the newly trained volunteer practices his skills under the personal direction of a professional staff member or an experienced volunteer. Such a program would allow the volunteer to gain confidence on the job, and it would lessen the chance of his making serious errors. Should a volunteer happen to be wholly incompetent, or unsuited for a particular role, this fact could also be discovered before it did any damage to the project or the people he tried to serve.

Once a volunteer passes beyond his apprenticeship, supervision may become less necessary. Certainly it becomes more difficult to provide. If the project is closely associated with an agency or involves special skills (in-school tutoring, hospital aid) the supervision may be conducted by paid, agency personnel (teachers, nurses). If it is part of a university course, especially if academic credit is involved, then a professor will obviously be concerned with supervision. Many projects involve students working in groups, and in this case, supervision may be a shared responsibility, or it may be delegated to one student in the group who has the most experience. It may also be helpful to formalize any such arrangement by requiring regular reports from the supervisors.

The most difficult area for supervision is also the most common—that is, the student working independently in the community. In this case, supervision may involve another volunteer or someone from a participating agency visiting the volunteer on the job. It may involve periodic interviews with the volunteer, who will be asked to describe his activities and problems. It may involve periodic rap-sessions with other volunteers doing the same kind of work. What is important in all of these techniques is that the trained volunteer is given some kind of follow-up support. A newsletter or refresher training session could aid this process considerably and keep the volunteer abreast of new ideas and developments. Ideally, any kind of supervision is a shared responsibility involving community people as well as those from the University. There should always be at least one person in a community whom volunteers can turn to for help and advice.

It is very important to remember that volunteers operate most effectively in an unstructured-structured environment where the over-all frame of reference is explained and outlined but where students have the flexibility to be innovative. The object of supervision is not to restrain the volunteer, but to provide him with guidance, encouragement, and support.

Evaluation

There are two kinds of evaluation involved in any project: that of the individual volunteer, and that of the project itself. The two cannot be separated in the end, but for the purpose of devising techniques of evaluation, they must be. The performance of an individual volunteer, while it affects the effectiveness of a project, should not determine

whether the project as a whole is functioning properly and should continue.

Logically, the need for evaluation evolves only after a volunteer or a project has been in operation for awhile; however, the time to devise your evaluating procedure should be at the very beginning. It is necessary to know before you start what goals you have, and how and when you expect to reach them. Without such information, you will have nothing against which to measure the actual achievement of a volunteer or project. It is therefore advisable during the planning stages of a project to write down a specific description of (1) the goals of the project as a whole, and (2) the individual goals and job requirements of each volunteer.

Evaluations may be informal (occasional interview or review sessions), or they may be quite elaborate. Generally the more specific the goals of a project, the more formal the evaluation should be. A tutoring project, for example, should have reasonably specific goals and means of evaluation. Reading tests (before and after) are an obvious solution, but other criteria should probably be used as well to measure the "extra curricular" achievements of the children in such areas as personality, interest, and responsiveness. Here, too, professionally devised tests can be used. What is important to decide *in the planning stage* is what the criteria will be, how the evaluations will be made, and who will make them.

As in training and supervision, the community should be involved along with the University in devising the criteria for evaluating a project. Some criteria that a person from the University might consider important could very easily be unimportant—or even unwanted, by a person with a community background. Remember, the children being tutored are not your own.

Evaluations are made to determine the effectiveness both of an individual volunteer and of the project as a whole; they should therefore lead to improvement. If a tutor is not helping a child to learn to read better or develop positively as an individual, he should either be given help or shifted to another position. As for the project evaluation, it should provide the basis for deciding what to do in the future. If the project is reaching its goals and the need for it still exists, the positive evaluation should provide the encouragement (and possibly additional funds) to continue. If the evaluation is negative, it should lead to a serious reassessment and possible termination of the project. And remember, if a project successfully achieves its goals and in the process eliminates the need for it, do not be afraid to close up shop and move on to some other area of volunteering.

Record Keeping

Although it may seem like unnecessary busy-work, records should be kept on all aspects of a volunteer project. Copies of volunteer applica-

tions, advertisements, reports on training sessions, supervision and evaluation forms—all such materials are important for the purposes of continuity and improvement. Without such information, new students cannot benefit from the accumulated experience of past volunteers.

Funding

One of the first problems in setting up a project is to establish the amount of money needed for the first year of operation. The amount will vary greatly with the size and scope of the project. (Some projects require no funds at all; others, such as a certain tutoring project in the Northwest, can cost as much as $9,000 a year.) The two basic areas of expense are administration and general project operation. If transportation is involved, it may consume the main part of the general budget. Then too, there are expenses for the telephone, stationery, stamps, a bulletin board, paper, and dozens of other unexpected items. In drawing up a budget, therefore, try to include all of these items (plus an amount for "miscellaneous"). A new project always costs more in the beginning; expenses level off once it is in operation.

There are several ways of raising the necessary funds. Pilot project or seed money, or demonstration funds might be available from the University or the community. If your project is of particular interest to an academic department, talk to the Dean or Department Head. Check with the Student Affairs Office, Student Activities Office, or even the Office of the President. They often have funds available to provide seed money for new projects. It may also be possible to tap alumni funds by arranging to have your project added to the list of organizations for which donations may be specifically earmarked. Perhaps the Alumni Office would allow you access to its mailing list for a special plea, if not to everyone, then at least to those who do not contribute regularly to the University itself.

There are many other sources of money on the campus. Most obvious are the Student Government, fraternities, sororities, residence halls, other kinds of clubs, workstudy programs, the Student Activities Fund, and even the University's administration budget. Many of these have funds already set aside for community service activities. If your project cannot be funded in full from a single source, try several. You might also consider one-shot fund-raising techniques such as raffles, art sales, cake bakes and car washes.

Do not be discouraged if you are turned down by the first group you approach. The first dollar is always the hardest. But once initial support is in, more will follow. Institutions, organizations and individuals are more likely to give if they know someone else has already made a commitment. And do not aim for too large a goal at first. Only when your project has been operating successfully for a few months is it time to consider the question of continued funding.

As for approaching sources of money off campus, the University may also be helpful. Usually some office on campus is specifically concerned with such matters, and its director may be a mine of information. He should know what organizations in the community can be tapped and how to do it. He should also have information on foundations and other sources of funding, and know what techniques are involved in writing a successful proposal. After reading a copy of your project description and talking with you, he can probably give you names of foundations and agencies to approach, thereby eliminating the shot-gun approach that some students have followed. Instead of writing letters to 200 foundations and receiving two positive responses ultimately representing $750 (as was the actual case with a project at one large university), you can focus your attention on a few of the more promising ones. The director may also be able to tell you which foundations and agencies prefer short information letters of request for funding, and which require elaborate proposals. If your university does not have such an office on campus, the Dean's Office, President's Office, or Public Relations Office might be able to provide the necessary technical assistance. Individual faculty members who have received grants might also be willing to share information.

In searching for funds outside of the University, do not forget to approach local businesses. This is an important source of revenue, especially since the businesses are part of the community they are being asked to support. One Midwestern university receives a major part of its annual budget from one large (but local) manufacturer of business equipment. Another university reports that 78 per cent of its annual budget comes from four local businesses. And a number of volunteer programs report that local businesses donate services (free automobile maintenance, free time on an addressograph machine) in addition to (or instead of) money. Local offices of national corporations, and local foundations are also possible sources of funding.

If money has to be raised from private sources, certain students should assume specific responsibility for the drive. For a student interested in business administration or public relations, the direction and supervision of a fund-raising program can be a fascinating (and possibly a course-related) project. The techniques that can be used are limited only by the imaginations of those involved. One group in New York runs an annual marathon on a local radio station. It operates 24 hours a day until its goal is met, and it uses a variety of gimmicks such as auction-by-air and match-a-grant games. Other groups use skip-a-lunch campaigns (proceeds donated to the project), theatre benefits, rock concerts and the like. The students who run the fund-raising campaign have an important task, not only because the money itself is necessary, but also because their approach is a form of advertising the aims and accomplishments of the project. Serious thought should be given to the implicit as well as explicit appeals they use.

Should a volunteer project solicit funds from the University? A steady

source of income helps to assure the continuity of a project from year to year, especially if its director or any member of the staff is salaried. It also frees all volunteer to work in the field. Accepting University funds, however, can raise the possibility of University control. If volunteers become too involved in social change, the good publicity and public relations that the University seeks might be jeopardized. For this reason, subtle or even overt pressure may be exerted to limit the scope of a project. Indeed, if volunteers become dependent on the University for funds, they may restrain *themselves* and thereby limit their own freedom of action.

The resolution to this problem depends entirely on the nature of your project and how sensitive to community needs your university's administration is. A great many projects across the country are funded entirely by the University, and an atmosphere of mutual trust and freedom of action prevails. A few projects staunchly refuse the offer of any university funds because students fear even the possibility of becoming "psychologically" dependent.

Transportation

Unless the volunteer project is within walking distance of campus, the need for transportation is obvious. A volunteer project is only as successful as the volunteers in the field, and if they cannot get into the community, or if they have to spend more time traveling than volunteering, you may end up with no project at all. The only universities to escape the headache are those located in areas where there is good public transportation. If your university does not have access to public transportation and is not within walking distance of the community it serves, the problem will probably be a continuous and perplexing one. Its solution will depend on the resources you have available on campus and the number of volunteers to be transported.

Public transportation should not be relied on too heavily until you have checked it out thoroughly. See what areas are serviced, how often they are serviced, and how much it costs. Volunteers may assume the cost of fares themselves, but if many trips are involved, these expenses will mount up. Travel costs should be included in your budget, and if you cannot reimburse the total cost assumed by the volunteers, an equitable percentage of it should be offered.

Student owned cars are often available, and if they are offered without charge, you are indeed fortunate. If many miles are involved, however, these expenses will accumulate very rapidly, and you run the risk of undermining the owner's continued support. For this reason, it is often advisable to subsidize privately owned cars. You might even build in an incentive by instituting a sliding scale of payment: for example, 5 cents per mile for the driver alone, 7 cents for a driver who delivers another volunteer, and 10 cents for a full carload. If funds are not avail-

able to reimburse the driver, it is common practice to have riders chip-in for gas and tolls. For any student-owned car, *always* check the insurance to make sure that *all* passengers are fully covered.

Leased cars are another possibility, but rental agencies generally require a contract for a minimum of one year. This is not feasible where projects operate only during the academic year (nine months) or for shorter periods of time. The cost of insurance is usually included in the leasing price, but do not forget to allow funds in your budget for gas, oil and possibly maintenance.

Rented cars may be obtained for short periods of time (a day, a week). Insurance, maintenance, and often gas and oil are included in the rental price, but the cost is generally prohibitive. This can be a viable arrangement if no other resources are available, or if cars are needed for only a short period of time.

Cabs can be hired, but even if they are filled to capacity they are prohibitively expensive. Moreover, many communities resent volunteers arriving in this manner. It is reasoned that if the project has money to spend on cabs every week, it certainly has abundant resources to contribute to the more realistic needs of the community.

A borrowed car can sometimes be acquired from a dealer or through some private organization if you are willing to publicize the arrangement with an appropriate sign on the car doors. Many volunteer projects approach local car dealers for such vehicles, but to ease the strain on any one dealer, it is advisable to approach a number of different ones. Try also to avoid dealers that other projects make a habit of approaching. Before you accept a car, make sure that you know who is going to be responsible for its maintenance and insurance—you or the company.

A purchased car for the exclusive use of volunteers may be a solution if you have the financial resources. Indeed, the amount of money spent on renting, leasing, or even hiring cabs might well pay for a new car in one year. Once you purchase a car for the program, however, it is totally your responsibility—registration, insurance, gas, oil, maintenance. Often the extra expenditure for leasing or renting more than compensates for the headaches of ownership.

University cars (if there are any) usually provide the most satisfactory solution to the transportation problem; however, some universities will charge you to use their vehicles. These costs vary from place to place, but on the average, they run about the same as for a leased car.

The *driver* of whatever car you use will usually be a volunteer. If many volunteers and projects are involved, however, arranging for drivers becomes complicated. Few volunteers enjoy doing nothing but transporting other volunteers from one place to another. To insure the greatest flexibility in your programming, therefore, it may be advisable to *hire* drivers. They may be paid out of workstudy grants or grants from project funds, and they will not object to picking up and dropping off volunteers at a number of different projects.

Any project, even if it operates only one car, should have a *trans-*

portation coordinator who is responsible for: scheduling routes and times, assigning passengers, and keeping records of the number of volunteers transported along with the costs involved for gas, insurance and maintenance. Indeed, if you are fortunate enough to have more than one car or van at your disposal, a transportation coordinator is almost essential. The job is time consuming and often thankless, and you would be well-advised to hire a person for it. A graduate, workstudy student in business administration or a similar field would be ideal.

In estimating *transportation costs*, be sure to remember such items as registration, insurance and maintenance. Even with educational institution discounts (10 to 20 percent), basic car rental costs often run as high as $250 a month. If gas and oil are not included, they will add about $50 a month depending on the number of miles traveled. An additional $30 a month will be required to cover insurance and maintenance costs if you are operating donated or loaned cars. The cost of operating a rented vehicle for a year may run as much as $4,000.

If you operate leased vehicles, the total monthly cost—including gas, oil, maintenance, insurance and the leasing price—should run between $150 and $200 for a 12-seater van or nine-passenger station wagon. Figured on an annual basis, the total cost of operating one such vehicle will be approximately $2,400.

Money needed to operate a transportation system can come from a variety of sources. In a few cases the University picks up the bill. In some cases the University and volunteer project share the bill. In most cases, the project itself assumes the cost.

Funds may be solicited, especially for transportation, from any of the sources mentioned above, or a percentage of them may be specifically donated by an agency or foundation. Organizations utilizing volunteers may also be persuaded to assume a portion of the transportation bill. They could be charged by the month, by the mile, or by the number of working volunteers. Under no circumstances, however, should a group be denied the services of volunteers because it cannot pay for its part of the transportation costs. Considered on a sliding scale, the better funded organizations can, in effect, subsidize those that cannot pay at all.

Liability

The question of liability is extremely complex, especially since laws vary from state to state. *Expert legal advice is therefore an absolute necessity.*

Such advice can sometimes be obtained from the legal department at a university. If not, the legal department of a community organization might be approached; or perhaps there is a legal aid service in the area or some public-spirited lawyers who would provide assistance free or at reduced rates. Be prepared, however, to pay whatever is necessary.

You need this information.

There are two main areas in which a volunteer may be liable: contracts and torts. The first of these could occur if a volunteer makes a contract for goods and services without first determining whether your project or an agency involved is prepared to pay for them. If no one agrees to pay, the student himself may be charged with the sum. Clearly, the best way to avoid such a situation is to designate one individual as being solely responsible for contracts.

The area of tort action is far more complicated. A volunteer may be held responsible, for example, if any child under his supervision has an accident. In such a case, liability is usually incurred only if the volunteer is shown to have been grossly negligent, but the legalities involved in his defense can prove costly.

It is also possible for a whole group of volunteers to be held liable for the action of a single volunteer. If, for example, a child is injured in a tag football game at a big brothers picnic, there is the possibility that the entire group could be sued.

It should be clear from these two examples that a volunteer project ought to be covered by the most comprehensive policy your lawyer and an insurance agent can work out. It should include not only the volunteer activities of the project, but also transportation. Be sure that you understand exactly what is, and what is *not* covered by your policy. Also be sure that *each one of your volunteers is informed as well.*

It may be that in working out this insurance coverage your lawyer will recommend the use of certain procedures that are not strictly binding in a court of law: for example, permission slips signed by the parents or guardians of children participating in a project; or waivers of liability signed by all persons riding in any vehicle operated in behalf of the project—including you, the Dean, or even the President of the University. In over thirty states such documents are not legally binding, but the fact that you have them on file offers a certain psychological deterrent to possible legal action.

Do not forget to check the insurance coverage on all your vehicles as well. If they are rented, leased, or borrowed from the University motor pool, they will come with some kind of insurance—usually collision and liability. Check the policy carefully, however, to see whether additional coverage is needed. In the area of insurance, you cannot be too careful.

5 projects to programs

On some campuses, a single project may represent the total effort in volunteer action; on others, it may be one of many projects operating independently of the rest.

If your project is the only one on campus, you might find that widening its scope would make it more effective. It might even provide a base upon which a centralized coordinating program could develop. Such a decision would depend on many factors, such as the size and location of your campus, your short and long term goals, and the relationship your project has with both the University and the community. The move would also require considerable discussion of how additional activities would strengthen your current impact, and it would require a good deal of energy, imagination, and commitment on the part of your present project staff.

If you represent one of several campus volunteer projects, you have the possibility of joining the others and thereby forming a coordinated program. Such a move could lift much of the administrative burden from the individual projects, prevent duplication of effort and provide continuity of services. To allay any fears that may exist about relinquishing the individual autonomy of each project, and to prevent feelings of competitiveness, all project members should plan the move together. Their meetings would quickly determine whether or not a common set of goals and a spirit of mutual support could evolve. At one campus, for example, these meetings took place during a weekend retreat. Two committee members from each project attended and as they articulated their goals and needs, a coordinated program to benefit everyone emerged.

Advantages of a Centralized Program

If you are thinking of enlarging the scope of your project, or of joining with others on campus, several advantages are worth considering.

An immediate benefit that a volunteer project can experience by participating in a centralized program is an expansion and improvement of its administrative and operating functions. This is not to say that the

project gives up control of these functions. Obviously, a tutoring project or a mental health project must dictate to the coordinating center its own special requirements in such areas as recruitment, training and supervision. But since the coordinating center is more broadly based than the project, it can recruit from a larger pool of possible volunteers. It can also bring a fresh approach and a greater degree of expertise to such areas as training and supervision. As for transportation, one car (or group of cars) should be able to serve all the projects.

Perhaps an even greater benefit of being part of a coordinated program is that the individual volunteers in each project have a greater opportunity of meeting and sharing experiences with people outside their own area of specialization. Through this exchange, new insights can be gained and an awareness of the interrelationship of volunteer efforts can develop. Thus a student who concludes from his personal experience that a teacher's aide project is of less value to volunteers and the community than a family planning project, might be confronted with the testimony of another student whose experience leads to the opposite conclusion. As student volunteers describe the ways in which they work, other volunteers discover new techniques that they can use. This kind of shared analysis and the verbalization of individual concerns does much to illuminate a participant's understanding of his role in the situation he faces. The result of such interaction between student and student, and between project and project, should lead to a significant improvement in the responsiveness, sensitivity and capability of the entire volunteer effort.

There is also the advantage of being able to delegate to the staff of the coordinating center the responsibility for penetrating the organizational mazes of the University to obtain funds for such things as transportation, to arrange for the use of special equipment for a particular tutoring project, or to understand the details of putting together an academic credit program for volunteer work. In short, a coordinating center can enable the individual student to concentrate most of his energies on the role which he originally volunteered to perform.

One more benefit of a coordinating center is the attainment of a sense of continuity. Instead of depending on the return of an individual director or a group of forceful volunteers (who have a way of transfering, graduating or dropping out), the members of a particular project can depend on the presence and guidance of the director of the coordinating center. If they are puzzled by a problem that arises, the files of the center may provide a clue to its solution. This does not mean that the identity of the individual projects is diminished; it means that each project has a greater chance to develop to its full capability.

A final benefit of having a coordinating center is that the community and University have one place to go for all volunteer activities. For the community, this single address is useful since many of its needs are broader than the activities of a single project. For the University, a single address means one place for anyone to go who wants to volunteer.

The Functions of a Coordinating Center

A centralized volunteer program will contain many of the same functions as an individual project—recruitment, orientation, training, supervision, evaluation—only on an expanded scale. However, there are several functions that are generally the sole responsibility of such a program: project coordination, information gathering and dissemination and volunteer placement.

Project Coordination

Coordinating the activities of a number of projects is quite different from coordinating the activities of a single one. It requires a sensitivity to the needs of all the participating projects, and a system that promotes the sharing of talent and knowledge. A well organized center provides students with great flexibility in planning, but it is prepared to cope with the inevitable crises that seem to be inherent in volunteering. A chaotic office discourages students from spending time there, and it weakens their enthusiasm and commitment to individual projects. All pertinent program information should therefore be recorded, kept up to date, and filed in a way that can be easily understood by anyone who needs to use it.

It is equally important that a coordinating center be constantly aware of the activities and ever-changing needs of its individual projects. Projects decide to consolidate so that these needs can be met more efficiently, and so that ideas and experiences can be exchanged. A system should be devised that facilitates this process: weekly meetings of project leaders, bi-monthly or monthly meetings of all program participants, open house one or two days a week in the office, as well as occasional parties and get-togethers.

Information Gathering and Dissemination

A coordinating program might also support its projects by seeking out information that helps them remain relevant and viable. This information might include:

A list of other projects and organizations, both on and off campus, that are related to social action. The list might include a summary of their goals and activities and an appropriate person to contact.

A calendar of events to keep project members informed of interesting and relevant activities.

A list of resource people, both on and off campus, who would be willing and able to lend their experience and expertise to the program's activities.

Suggestions on how and where to look for funds.

Information about where to obtain free or low cost project materials (e.g., arts and crafts groups have been known to receive miscut paper free

of charge from book binding companies).

Books, reading material, periodicals and research data that provide volunteers with a range of perspectives beyond the particular experiences of their own campus program.

Such information should be readily accessible to all project members. An up-to-date bulletin board, looseleaf notebooks, index cards, magazine racks, and a well-organized filing system help the process. Information of special interest to particular volunteers can be sent to them through the mail or left in a message drop-off box in the office.

Most of this material should be useful to students who are interested in becoming involved professionally in social action work, but who have little or no related experience. It can provide information about the range of alternatives open to them, and it can give them a sense of how individual project activities relate to large-scale social change. In some instances, moreover, exposure to information about creative service opportunities developing in such areas as law, public and mental health, and education may help students resolve their choice of a career.

Volunteer Placement

Since a coordinating program is the most likely source of information for students interested in volunteering for social action activities, a significant amount of time should be spent on placement. Student conducted interviews can provide recruits with information about volunteer opportunities that relate to their past experience and are congruent with their own aims and goals. This kind of peer counseling has obvious advantages to students attempting to think through their own commitment to social change.

In addition to placing students in programs that are under the umbrella of the center, you may want to include off campus programs that need volunteer assistance. This expanded role would require a survey of the volunteer needs in your vicinity. You would also have to maintain close communication with individuals in each organization who are responsible for volunteer supervision.

Since increasing numbers of students are interested in participating during the summer in work that is personally meaningful—and many have the financial resources to volunteer their time—you may eventually want to include information about summer opportunities throughout the country. You may also include suggestions for those students who cannot afford to volunteer their time entirely. Often local church groups or business organizations offer partial support for social action activities.

The Structure of a Coordinating Center

The most successful coordinating center is the one that evolves out

of the particular needs and characteristics of its own individual projects. Consequently, no single structural model can be relevant to volunteer programs in all of the 2,600 institutions of higher learning across the nation. Some common patterns of experience have emerged, however, in the establishment of currently existing centers, and an outline of these may help you to develop one that serves your particular needs.

The most casual kind of structure is that of a loose federation where members of different projects meet periodically to share experiences and areas of concern. These meetings can provide positive reinforcement for project leaders when they discover that the seemingly insurmountable problems facing their own project are not unique.

Instead of a loose federation with occasional meetings, project leaders sometimes form a coordinating committee, consisting of a chairman and possibly vice-chairmen. Each member of the newly-formed committee may be responsible for exploring a particular problem or topic area of interest to all projects. Such division of labor for the common good is one of the first steps in the direction of an effective coordinating effort. Responsibility may also be delegated for the coordination of the various functions of the projects, such as recruitment, training and transportation. A volunteer working with a specific tenants' rights project, for example, may find that he is more interested in working on a general recruitment program; or a person attempting to solve the problem of transporting volunteers for a single project may be interested in designing a transportation system for *all* projects.

To insure the continuity and stability of their volunteer effort, the members of such a committee sometimes organize themselves more formally and elect a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Sometimes the demands of such offices require all the time a volunteer can give. Though certain aspects of a project's administration have thus been centralized, each project still retains its clear identity and individuality.

One approach to the coordination of volunteer projects that has been demonstrated to work successfully involves a partnership of the University and students. For its part, the University sets up an office for the volunteer program with a full-time director who serves as a resource person and coordinator. His role is to help but not to dominate student projects. For their part, students continue to run the projects and are invited to make use of the centralized services that the office provides. All that each project must be willing to do is coordinate its activities with those of the other projects.

As a full-time, year-round staff member of the University, the director lends the volunteer effort a continuity and a stability that is reassuring, especially to the community. He acts as a liaison with other University departments, and he prevents wasteful duplication of effort that can exist where projects operate independent of one another. The director is also available to help students think through and develop ideas into a project, and to keep the whole program continually relevant and re-

sponsive to campus and community needs.

Along with a director, many such coordinating programs retain a board of directors composed of student volunteers. This board often has the power of hiring the director; it also assists and advises him in all of his coordinating activities. A number of programs also have a board of advisors composed of University administrators, faculty, graduate students, community residents, and specialists. Such a board can contribute invaluable expertise to a program.

Not all coordinating programs are directed at projects, however. There is one in an Eastern college that conscientiously avoids any close involvement with projects and directs its full attention to the volunteers themselves. It maintains large, up-to-date files of local volunteer projects and organizations, both on and off campus; of opportunities nation-wide for summer volunteering; and of career opportunities in social action. Students are invited to browse through the files. Occasionally it sponsors lectures and seminars designed to interest students in the concept of volunteering, and its board of student advisors raises money to support volunteers who are unable for financial reasons to contribute as much time as they would like to social action. The center thus places volunteers in dozens of social action projects, but it performs none of the other activities usually associated with a coordinating center, such as training, supervising, transporting and evaluating.

This coordinating center is unlike most "standard" models by being strictly volunteer-oriented, as opposed to project-oriented, but it admirably fits the needs of the community in which it is located. It therefore illustrates the general rule that the best structural model is the one that most fully satisfies your own particular needs.

6 pitfalls

Throughout the manual we have discussed various elements involved in the operation of a student volunteer program. Suggestions were made about what has and what has not worked in existing programs. In this chapter we will focus on some of the problems that can jeopardize an entire operation. We will suggest ways to avoid or correct the problems, and at the end of the chapter, we will include a checklist to help you test your own program.

Planning and Goals

Any volunteer action should be planned. In particular, assess your goals and your resources. Take stock of the knowledge of faculty members and graduate students in related fields, the general experience of past and current projects, and the individual experiences of the volunteers themselves. Also make sure you are informed of the community needs and goals by incorporating community representatives into the planning process. It is important to fit programs to people and not the other way around, and it is often not easy to avoid fitting community needs to the kinds of projects the students want. Community people should be on all planning committees, and meetings should be held in the community itself for residents to attend. However, don't neglect volunteers in the planning process. Try having seminars once a semester for them to develop and improve their own projects.

You should plan both immediate and long-range goals. In other words, decide *why* you are having a volunteer project at all (the long run), and then map out the immediate steps needed to achieve it. For example, if your long-range goal is to improve elementary education in the community, the first steps might be to set up tutorial and teachers' aide projects. Ultimately you might want to work for community control of the school or even a community-run free school as an alternative to the existing one. Whatever the goals, plan them. The effectiveness of current and future projects is bound to be reduced if you lack an over-all objective, a set of criteria for evaluating present and future programs, and a mechanism for including community residents as well as a majority of the volunteers in the goal-making process.

In planning, always underestimate your ability to deliver. If you overcommit the program, the volunteers or yourself, you will seriously

jeopardize future relations with both the community and the University. Realistically assay the time and talent required for a project, and compare your conclusions with a conservative estimate of the resources available and the commitment of the volunteers.

Organization and Responsibility

People involved in volunteer projects often strongly dislike anything resembling bureaucracy. While it is true that students are innovative and capable of working on their own, central coordination is necessary nonetheless to hold things together. Responsibility must be delegated in such areas as recruitment, orientation, training, supervision, evaluation and publicity—with each person having a clear understanding of his position. Also, planning and structuring can only be accomplished if it includes the people who can speak for what is currently happening in different phases of the program.

The areas of orientation, training, supervision and evaluation deserve special attention. Together they provide the necessary support to help keep students interested, see the issues involved, improve their performances, and decide whether, in fact, anything worthwhile is being accomplished. *Orientation* should define the minimum commitment expected of each volunteer in terms of time and responsibility. It should give each person a clear idea of his job and thus improve the chances of its being done. And it should introduce the volunteer to the community in which he will work, thereby lessening the chances of his unwittingly alienating any of its members. *Training* should furnish the technical and operational knowledge necessary for the volunteer. It should also provide him with more knowledge of the nature of the community as a whole and of the agency or group of people he will be working with. *Supervision* should be the clear responsibility of someone—project leaders, appropriate community people, or perhaps a joint committee made up of members of each group. However, each volunteer should still have one person to whom he is *directly* responsible, and one person in the community to who he can turn for advice and help. Try to keep the supervision process flexible enough to allow innovation on the part of the volunteer. *Evaluation* should help keep projects directed toward fulfilling their goals; it should also assess the work of each volunteer in light of those goals. Each project should have an individual who is in charge of collecting the evaluative information.

Communication and Decision-Making

All volunteers should be involved in making the decisions that affect them. In large programs, this can be accomplished through a planning committee staffed by representatives from each project. Ideological

differences may arise among the members of this committee, but if every project is involved, then the areas of disagreement stand a reasonable chance of being resolved. If jealousies and other tensions are produced in the planning committee, they can filter down to the volunteers and undermine the impact and unity of the total program. To avoid this situation, all staff members must openly confront the issues involved in any conflict and continuously build a foundation of trust and respect. While it may seem like a waste of time to make sure that everyone agrees on a course of action, a unilateral decision by one or a few members will only breed hostility and resentment.

The volunteers themselves should also be involved in the decision-making process, if not directly through group meetings, then indirectly through personal contact with their representatives. Their needs, abilities and limitations must be respected. If decisions are made without them, disgruntled volunteers will be lax in implementing the policies. Or worse still, they may be called upon to do things beyond their ability or training. What may appear to be a lack of individual responsibility may in reality be a result of putting too much responsibility onto untrained volunteers or those with limited time or energy.

Funding and Controls

The acceptance of financial support from any source incurs some risk of undue influence and control. To maintain the support of the University, for example, and to gain access to its physical resources, you may have to spend considerable time keeping up a cordial relationship with certain administrative offices. A program administrator or concerned faculty member can often be an effective go-between for negotiations. He could operate as an arbiter or even an apologist for the program or for particular volunteers.

There will always be minor conflicts between the University and any ambitious volunteer project, but the atmosphere will be less threatening to all if a written contract is drawn up between the two sides. Your part should include a description of your goals, but it should allow for flexibility in project modification. The University part should include any specific commitments it is making and any obligations you incur by accepting its support.

Volunteer programs develop best where students control their own activities and make decisions. Motivation and commitment are high and there is freedom for creative innovation. But this freedom often leads to confronting the University itself on activities (or lack of them) that adversely affect the campus or the non-academic community around it. The threat that these confrontations present should be ameliorated by a faculty or program administrator and by a "contract" delineating University-program interaction. Remember that an atmosphere of mutual trust is much better than either an apologist or a contract; besides, neither one is strictly binding.

Store of Information

As part of organizing a project, be sure to have some in-depth information or research on the community at large. While active involvement in a community does provide some background knowledge, a sound over-all knowledge of the community and its general movement is needed to relate program activities to the larger goals of social change. You should know enough to avoid one mistake recently made by a volunteer who was sent into a section of the community to solicit support for a school project, only to discover that the children were regularly bussed to another school district.

Use of Volunteers

Students should be assigned on an individual basis according to their abilities, time and personalities. They should also not be given too much or too little responsibility. If they assume too much responsibility for the running of a community project, or if they are too pushy about their roles and responsibilities, they can even inadvertently reinforce a common community feeling that the residents are outsiders in a college student volunteer effort. Furthermore, over-involvement of students can stifle the confidence of residents in their own ability to accomplish change through their own group action, and it can retard the development of other community-initiated programs dealing with other local problems. Conversely, capable students should not be assigned peripheral and menial tasks such as typing, filing, and envelope-stuffing, particularly if they are not made to feel these are integral parts of a larger effort. Everyone likes to believe that what he is doing is meaningful.

Don't lose sight of the fact that students do have a valuable contribution to make. They bring to a community resources that may not be available otherwise. They often have a fresh outlook, high motivation, intense concern, critical viewpoints, innovative ideas, flexible time schedules, a desire to work for change, and enormous energy. These qualities can be successfully utilized, but only as long as they are offered in conjunction with what the community is already doing (or wants to do), and in a spirit of providing assistance rather than answers.

Alienation of the Community

A student must realize at the outset of his volunteer action that some people may not *want* his services. He has been brought up in one world, and like it or not, he has acquired certain ideas and attitudes from it. People who do not share his upbringing may not share his belief that they need help. Even if he does not intend to make them over in his own image, they may have reason to suspect that he will try.

Sometimes the best way to serve is to stand and wait. This may consist of being available to someone already working in the community. It may involve doing menial or routine jobs so that such persons can be free to do other things. It may even lead to the decision that working in a certain community is impossible at a certain time and that the only alternative is to become committed to a project elsewhere. It may take patience and a long period of time to establish the crucial element of trust.

Credit for Volunteering

Credit can provide an impetus for volunteers as long as it is handled with care. On the one hand, it means you will have a supply of students who will have time to volunteer because they are effectively carrying one less course; it also means you will have some measure of control over them because you contribute to the course grade they receive for their work. On the other hand, giving course credit to volunteers presents some problems. Students who are directly responsible to a professor may lose some measure of their freedom to be creative or to challenge the means and goals of their work. They may also, even unwittingly, shift the emphasis of their work from helping the project and the community to achieving for a grade. They may also undermine the integrity of the project and their relationship with the community by appearing to study the people they meet.

Several things can be done to make credit for volunteering a workable manpower source. First, careful screening of volunteers can eliminate those who are in it only for the credit. Second, the faculty should set up volunteer action as an *option* for a course rather than a *requirement*. This avoids making unwilling volunteers out of disinterested students. Third, the administration of the project should be out of the hands of the professor whose course provides the academic credit; this way, students can feel free to criticize without having it reflected in their grades. Finally, research projects should not be transformed into volunteer projects or presented under such a guise. People are not dumb; in communities which have been analyzed, socialized, dissected and computerized, individuals are particularly sensitive and resentful of further forms of manipulation and exploitation, even if *you* feel it is for their own good.

Duplication of Effort

It is a waste of time, money and manpower to have two or more groups on campus or in the community working unknown to each other on the same project. Such duplication can be avoided by having a single coordinating center for exchange of information and ideas. The coordinating center should be widely known throughout the community as well as the

campus, and it should serve as a clearinghouse for all requests for student volunteers. A single clearinghouse could prevent such mix-ups as producing four separate tutors in response to a request for one, or assigning three big brothers to one little brother. A central clearinghouse will also serve to reduce competition among agencies and community groups for volunteers.

Sustaining the Effort

Eventually the novelty of any volunteer project is going to wear off. There will be periods of tensions, frustrations, setbacks and policy differences. Examinations, vacations and national events will intervene. Student interests will change, and there will be a turnover in volunteers. It is therefore necessary that someone pay attention to the daily tasks necessary to *sustain* any volunteering effort. Ideally you should have a paid permanent director or coordinator instead of assuming the total responsibility for the program yourself or laying it in the hands of your planning committee. Such a person can provide the continuity that students often cannot, both during examination periods and long summer holidays, and also from year to year. Through him a steady supply of information can be collected, new ideas can be implemented, new students can be recruited to work through the following semester, and project leaders can be encouraged to choose and train their successors.

Elimination of Projects

Since the aim of any volunteering effort should be the elimination of the need that occasioned it, each project you undertake should have built into it a self-destructing element. If the need disappears, so should the project; however, any established system (including a volunteer project) tends to perpetuate itself. If the time comes to end a project, don't just drop it; that's wasteful and it hurts peoples' feelings. Instead, use your contacts and relationships to turn the project into something else. For example, a project begun to force slum landlords into complying with housing codes can turn into one to pressure stores and supermarkets not to overcharge at their inner-city branches.

Points to Keep in Mind: A Checklist

- ☐ Does the community really want you there? How do you know?
- ☐ Is everyone involved in the program or affected by it, participating in its planning? (Faculty, student volunteers, community members, agencies?)

- ☐ Do you overestimate your ability to deliver when planning project goals?
- ☐ Do you delegate responsibility for important areas such as orientation, training, supervision and evaluation? Are the individuals in charge of these areas participating in program planning?
- ☐ Is your decision-making process a group effort (even if it is cumbersome or at times unwieldy)? Unilateral actions undermine trust and the sense of participation and responsibility.
- ☐ Who is funding you? What do they expect of you because they give you money? Are you prepared to furnish or do it? What other sources of funding can you tap but don't?
- ☐ Is there some provision for stockpiling and updating information on the community and what's happening there?
- ☐ How are volunteers assigned in the program? Are they taking too much of program operation away from the community?
- ☐ Do volunteers get credit for their work? Are they true volunteers or must they work on the project as part of the course? Does the course professor at all influence the project to suit his course's needs?
- ☐ Is there a coordinating center for all volunteer projects, both university and community based? Who runs it and where is it located? How widely known is it? Do you make use of it?
- ☐ Is there a permanent, paid program director? Is he any good? What does he do (ostensibly and really)? Whose side is he on, if anyone's?
- ☐ Is the project doing anything? If not, can the people involved in it do something else?

7 project ideas

This chapter briefly describes a number of student volunteer projects that might be offered at a university. The descriptions are based on dozens currently in operation throughout the country. Although no attempt has been made to compile a complete list, the projects chosen should give you some idea of the range and inventiveness of student volunteering. They are broken down into areas (for people who want to thumb through the chapter), but there is a great deal of overlap and interplay among them. Drug problems, for example, could go under "Education," "Health" or "Community Services." An effort has been made to call attention to special problems and to some less conventional projects.

Education

Meals on Wheels

Children can't learn if they're hungry, so one way to help is through a free breakfast program. You can work under the supervision of a community agency or group (many of which already exist across the country), to provide free breakfasts. You can prepare food and drive the vans and station wagons (your own or provided by the agency) to school and other regular stops in the community. If you're interested you should contact a local school, a welfare rights group, or a grassroots community organization.

Sesame Street Seminar

Play can always be educational. You can hold a "Sesame Street Seminar" with pre-schoolers, for example, where you meet with small groups of children on Saturday morning to watch *Sesame Street* on TV and then play some related learning-oriented games. You can get training for this kind of activity either from a community agency or from your Education Department. As an alternative for Saturday mornings, you might want to help out at a community day care center where similar activities go on daily.

Story Hour

If you'd rather read than play, you might want to volunteer to work with children at a branch library on weekends, telling or reading stories and fairy tales.

Tales on Wheels

One group we know drives a covered van—painted with storybook characters—to inner-city parks and playgrounds on the weekends and gives dramatic readings for the children who are attracted by it. The traveling van is a better idea than simple readings; how many ghetto children do you know who spend their time at branch libraries?

Language Lab Tutoring Project

As a college student you have many resources at your disposal that grammar and high school students in the community could use. For instance, well-equipped language labs are a proven teaching aid, and almost all universities have them. Get clearance from the Language Department to use its facilities, and round up some college students who are bilingual or who are majoring in a foreign language, to give one afternoon a week of their time to work with foreign-born high school students, or those who do not speak or read English fluently. A syllabus can be prepared in conjunction with the high schools' language teachers. The volunteers can help their pupils practice pronunciation and develop a facility in spoken conversation and listening comprehension. Some of the student-teacher barriers between the volunteers and their pupils can be broken by informal trips and parties.

Annual Science Fair

Try getting an annual Science Fair going. Contact the high school so they'll let you come into the classes and talk with them about project topics and designs. You can work with students once a week as "consultants" and meanwhile help secure needed supplies, some of which can be borrowed from the University. Also help advertise the Fair and get the University to host it; have faculty members judge the projects and award prizes in various categories. Contact the local press and have them cover the Fair; the University will think it's good P. R. and the publicity will get students to produce more and better projects.

Drama-Corps

If your interests run more to the theatrical, you might want to spend two afternoons or so a week helping high school students write and stage one-act plays. Two college students can team up with two or three high school students in the writing of a play, but you can work with larger groups in supervising the actual production. Arrange to have the plays performed by the high school students both at their school and at the University for university student

audiences. After the performances, have the players and audience break into discussion groups to talk about the dramatic experience and to explore their roles in society and the community.

Movie Team

Along these lines, if you have the cash or can get it from the University, you can organize a loosely constructed course in photography for kids. It will mean buying or renting the equipment (still or 8mm. movie cameras, film, etc.), or maybe you can talk some corporation into lending or donating what you need. The results can be well worth the trouble. Film is a means of expression, communication, and introspection—all in one. Again, you can probably get the University to host a photography exhibit or a screening of films, and you can get fairly good local press coverage for it.

Neighborhood Paint-In

If you're artistically inclined, you might try having a paint-in project with older children. Organize a group to design a mural for a blank wall of a community building which the kids (and anyone else) can help paint. It's a good way to make friends with community residents. This project should be done through a community agency which will find walls to be painted and help talk local firms into donating paint. Remember, the residents of the community *live* there—it's their turf and their buildings.

Law-for-Laymen Seminars

If you're a law student, contact the school system about conducting weekly seminars in junior and senior high schools on the fundamentals of law. Remember, most people in deprived areas fear the law or look at it as an enemy because they don't understand how it works. Offer a course that will explain such basics as what a tort is, and use case studies to show how law can function as an instrument for social change. You probably won't get your law school to award academic credit for the work, but your seminars might be an integral part of a high school civics or history course.

SAT Sessions

You can also meet two or three times a week with high school students to help prepare them to take the college entrance examination boards (SAT's). You will generally work with small groups of students and help them with individual problem areas, but also arrange to administer practice SAT's (so that they know what to expect) and to discuss the answers to questions afterwards. A "course" ought to last about nine weeks and meet in a community center or school. A faculty member from the Education De-

partment can offer training and supervision for volunteers, and the Department itself should be able to furnish SAT supplies.

Free University Projects

If you're really ambitious you can organize a People's Free University, or volunteer to teach courses in one that already exists. Community agencies can be called on to help sponsor the University and provide space for classes to meet. Encourage faculty members to volunteer to teach courses, and make arrangements for them to do so. Classes should be for adults only and should be taught in the community. Would *you* travel at night to a strange part of town and wander among unfamiliar buildings to attend unfamiliar classes? College students should be excluded from taking courses because their presence would be intimidating. Contact the local Board of Education to make provisions to let people prepare for high school and college equivalency examinations.

Health

Drug Line

An increasingly popular (and necessary) volunteer project is a drug hotline. People (especially kids) need someone to call when they are on bad trips, take unidentified drugs, or feel suicidal. They need someone who is sympathetic and anonymous; someone who is not going to bust them or moralize to them. Any competent drug hotline should operate under the auspices of a community agency and in conjunction with a hospital that provides ambulance service for callers who need immediate assistance. Remember that you as an individual cannot be both nonestablishment and sympathetic to a person, and also come on as a medical specialist and clinical observer. You should use your position as a peer to break down barriers. Many hotline callers just want to have someone to talk to or to reassure them. Don't try to operate a hotline by yourself or without backup service; two volunteers must be on at all times in case of emergencies. Remember – a medical staff and chaplain's office can provide you and other volunteers with useful information about drugs and counseling techniques. This kind of expertise is absolutely *essential* for this job.

An extension of the drug educa-

Project Turn Off

tion project. After you've been trained by medical personnel and briefed on the local situation by a community agency, get permission from the school system to go into the high schools to run discussion groups with students *and* teachers about drug use and abuse. The kids will know more than the teachers about drugs, but both groups will have their misconceptions. As a volunteer you can also help break down barriers of distrust and ignorance between students and teachers through the structure of drug discussion groups.

Health Mobile

One of the most useful student volunteer contributions to a community is to operate a medical van. If you have no medical training, you can help by taking vital signs (blood pressure, temperature, etc.) or simply driving the van. If you do have a medical background, you can aid the van's doctor and nurse by doing work-ups on patients and administering tests for things like lead poisoning and sickle cell anemia (a condition common to many Blacks). A medical van is also an opportunity to get into the community to teach sanitation and nutrition, and to give out information on family planning devices, techniques and literature. Medical vans can also provide a free shuttle service to hospital outpatient clinics where tests can be performed which the van staff cannot do. You should plan on working once or twice a week on a regular schedule so that you service the same stops in the city and get to know the people.

Hospital Seminar

A special project for students in medical school is to conduct hospital seminars and demonstrations (how a stethoscope works, etc.) for inner-city grammar school and high school students. These kids often have a fear of hospitals because all they usually see is the emergency room. Such a project helps to break down this fear; it also can encourage the kids to study for a profession in a medical field. A local agency or school board should be able to provide contacts with inner-city students.

Aging

Care Corps

Older people do not lose their love of life because of their years; they only get cut off from interpersonal contact. If you want to do custodial care,

call a nursing home, hospital, or other such agency. That kind of volunteer assistance is needed, and those agencies can place you where you're best suited. But don't pass off the elderly because of their years of loneliness; instead, try calling up the local senior citizens group to see what you can do. If there isn't such a group, help organize one. There's a lot that needs changing in the area of Social Security benefits, assistance, etc.

Senior Summer Seminar

Hold a three-week seminar and festival for the aged of the community. Get students and faculty to hold seminars in various skills and hobbies, such as woodcarving, sewing, music appreciation, stamp collecting and short story writing. Have the elderly teach courses to students, too; it will make them feel worthwhile and you'd probably learn a lot. Arrange films, concerts, and lectures through the University and local agencies. Get some people to provide transportation for those who could otherwise not attend.

Adopt a Grandparent

On a one-to-one level you can have an adopt-a-grandparent project, where each student assumes personal responsibility for one elderly person. Telephone calls, letters, visits, social activities, and trips to the store, museums, concerts—all this will give your "grandparent" a sense of being wanted, and a pipeline to the "outside" world. Before you get involved, though, arrange for a community agency to hold regular discussion groups to increase student awareness of the personal, social, economic and political problems of the elderly.

Correctional Institutions and Programs

One of the forgotten minorities in this country is the people behind bars. The rehabilitative value of incarceration is doubtful, but you can help in a number of ways to get people out of institutions and back into society. If you want to work with juveniles, you can volunteer as a probation officer, helping kids with their social adjustment, school work and job placement. Many kids are placed in "homes" or institutions simply because there aren't enough probation officers, and the juvenile courts would prob-

Probation Corps

ably welcome any assistance you could offer. For starters, try contacting people at the local criminal or juvenile court; they will refer you to the right people in the probation department or other agency.

Job Wheels

If you have cars at your disposal, you can organize motor pools for local prison inmates on "work-release" to drive them to and from their jobs each day. Your volunteering will make work-release possible for many inmates, as they often cannot get into such programs without the assurance of adequate transportation. A work-release car pool will also give both you and the inmates a chance for informal rap sessions. One way to get started is to contact the treatment director or work-release supervisor of the prison.

Job Scouts

Another thing you can do for inmates is to find them jobs for work-release and for when they get out of prison. Work-release supervisors, other prison administrators and the City Employment Office can provide letters of introduction to help you canvas factories, farms and businesses. Much of your work will involve talking with prospective employers, helping them to understand the problems an ex-convict has in re-entering society, and getting them to accept inmate employees. Placement in work-release projects is often limited to the number of known job openings, so if you furnish a regularly up-dated job list to prison officials, you'll be helping that many more people get out of prison and back into society.

Prison Tutors

Some inmates will never get good jobs, either work-release or permanent, because they lack the basic skills. You could volunteer to tutor in the prison once a week or so, but an even better idea would be to talk to the Education Department and Ed. School majors. The Department might be willing to have its students go to the prisons five times a week to hold classes for the inmates in lieu of regular student teaching in public schools. The students should receive course credit for their work, and some arrangement might also be made so that the inmates would receive credit toward high school equivalency degrees for the courses they take.

In-Prison Courses

Legal Aid and Information

Drug hotlines are not the only kind of emergency

Ask and Answer Service

service a community needs. If you have a high tolerance for frustration, you might want to operate a "Who-What-Where" storefront designed to help community residents penetrate the maze of official and unofficial bureaucracy that prevents the satisfying of their various needs. Most requests will involve some agency of local or state government (lack of garbage collection, unsafe street conditions, inadequate utility service, etc.), or else consumer problems and complaints. You should approach the mayor's office and the local newspaper for support and publicity, as well as for the information you will need to disseminate. (Your local government officials will be glad to have people call *you* with their problems instead of them.) As with other services, this one does not have to operate 24 hours a day; however, it would be useful to have it open afternoons and evenings when it is usually difficult to contact anyone else.

IRS Squad

You can also operate a service dealing with special problems. If you're a law or business student, organize support for a storefront office to help community residents with their income tax returns. Most people have difficulty filling out complex government forms and are ignorant of the many exemptions and tax deductions they are entitled to. Tax law professors should help as trainers and consultants because the law is very complex. This kind of storefront legal office won't interfere with law school semester exams, as it only needs to be open from January to April; however, it should be located in the community, rather than at the University. Local radio and TV stations will be glad to advertise you as a community service. Don't forget that the local IRS office can provide you with useful information and techniques.

Housing Help

Another valuable service can deal with housing. Again, a legal background is helpful, and law faculty supervision is necessary. You can do research into local housing codes and regulations as well as the validity of leases, eviction proceedings, and so on. If you do not have a law school education, you can still help by answering tenants' questions and by maintaining an up-dated list of lawyers who will represent low-income families for little or no fee. Most urban areas already have some form of storefront housing office which can either use your services or assist you in setting up your own in another part of the community. Often this kind of storefront office goes beyond

forcing the renovation of deteriorating building and the blocking of illegal evictions to provide a basis for new legislation in the area of housing codes and their enforcement.

Project Price Watch

One kind of community information service that requires no legal background is a "price watch." This involves surveying food and department stores in and around the community to establish the relative prices and quality of essential items. Put out a bi-monthly newsletter updating your information on who sells the best for the least, and distribute it widely. Operate anonymously so stores won't lower their prices when they know you'll be in. With a fair amount of publicity you can force stores to lower their prices. Chain stores often charge more in inner-city areas, where the residents are less likely to be comparison shoppers than people in suburban areas.

Community Services

Companionship Crusade

If you don't like organizational work, why not "adopt" a long-term patient in a hospital or nursing home? Establish a one-to-one relationship. Visit your friend at least once a week and telephone regularly. "Adoption" can serve patients of all ages who have little or no contact with anyone besides doctors and hospital personnel. You can be placed through the hospital's director of volunteers or social services. Don't overlook the handicapped or incurably ill who live at home rather than in hospitals or nursing homes.

Coffee House

Coffee houses where kids can get away from home to be with their friends and amuse themselves are always appreciated. A local church or university chaplain's house will usually donate a basement to meet in. Work with community teen-agers and let it be *theirs*—decorated the way they want; a place where they can listen to performers play and sing (or do it themselves). Some will also want to read poetry, play checkers, or just sit and talk. An occasional "speaker" who will be available for rap sessions might be a good idea. Start small; don't try to be open every night or the whole crew will collapse and quit from exhaustion. Work in rotation and take a night once a week when you are responsible for opening, closing and cleaning up the Coffee House.

Word of mouth is the only meaningful publicity for something like this, so make sure the community kids know and feel it is *their* place.

Troubadour Teams

If your interest runs to the dramatic, you can work with a roving improvisational theater group. It doesn't have to be made up of drama students and it doesn't have to be elaborate. You can perform evenings and weekends in VA hospitals, regular hospitals, nursing homes and children's wards (you might even put in an appearance at school assemblies). Shut-ins are not recluses, so make the material topical or let it come out of suggestions made by the audience. With a good group you can break down barriers, have people overcome their infirmities and disabilities, and communicate more freely with one another.

Annual Carnival for the Handicapped

You could also help the handicapped perform for you and for themselves through an annual one or two-day carnival. During the year the handicapped can work on arts and crafts (for a show-and-sale), one-act plays (to be staged for a contest), athletic events, magic shows and other carnival activities. You can help them in preparation of entries and also solicit local shops and clubs for funds, prizes, and even job opportunities for the contestants. If you don't know where to start, call the local handicapped association or hospital for people to contact.

Carpool Concern Corps

Another way to help the handicapped, the elderly, or any people who have difficulty getting around is through a carpool. You can drive them to museums, art galleries, concerts, and the countryside. Take community residents shopping at lower-priced suburban stores, or drive families and friends to hospitals and nursing homes to visit patients. Each day of the week could be assigned to a special group (the elderly, community residents for shopping trips, etc.), and you could drive the same day each week in order to know your passengers better. You should try to find some agency or auto dealership that will furnish cars, station wagons, or vans for you to use. A shortage of cars will obviously limit the number of people you can help.

Money Marathon

All groups need money. You can organize a fund-raising campaign for a certain agency or event, or you can have a general fund-raising effort and give the money to groups as it is needed. Old-style marathons are always fun. With the cooperation of a local radio station, hold an around-the-clock fund-raising-by-air

program that operates either until the goal is reached or until a certain number of days has passed. Talk some distinguished professors into participating as on-the-air auctioneers; get local officials to "sing for a dollar" (with specified amounts pledged by phone); make up match-a-grant games. Local merchants will donate items to be auctioned off; volunteers can man a half dozen phone lines.

Don't get discouraged or give up if you haven't got the time to make a regular commitment to volunteering. There are many like yourself on campus; together you can run a "cool line" for non-emergency community work. You can pick up calls or work from a checklist of community needs that are short-term, such as assistance at polling stations, clean-up campaigns, distribution of leaflets and non-regular transportation of the elderly and handicapped. You can also work on an emergency short-term basis in the case of fires, floods, power shortages, and other situations which require numbers of volunteers to move people and things, to cordon off areas, and to search for missing persons.

Cool-Line Committee

One other form of community service is the creation of alternatives to existing structures and systems —i.e., rather than working with established institutions, you set up your own. For example, instead of keeping tabs on food store prices, you can set up a food cooperative or work with existing ones in the community. Food co-ops involve the pooling of orders so that people can buy in quantity directly from distributors. In this way, you can get bulk discounts and avoid the middlemen of food stores. Talk to interested residents to explain how co-ops work. Volunteer to distribute food orders, to collect money, and to order and distribute the produce. Co-ops are a way of uniting people, and many of them expand their activities in the areas of social action and community improvement.

Food Co-op

Similarly, instead of trying to force landlords into repairing deteriorating buildings, consider working with engineering, art, and architecture students, together with faculty advisors and a community agency, to rebuild and remodel community houses, stores, etc. A large budget isn't needed if the University or a local building materials dealer will donate supplies. As many engineering and architecture departments require supervised projects of their students. Partici-

Project Re-claim

pants might get course credit for their work. Besides, if academic credit is involved, the University might be willing to subsidize the project.

Clearwater Creek Project

Rather than set-up pollution complaint hotlines (which are already in operation in many parts of the country), why not use the University's technical facilities to help purify a local river? Students interested in chemistry and biology can analyze the pollutants in the river and their effect on the natural environment; others can research the legal aspects of polluting and help the community put pressure on the guilty parties to stop.

Most community service projects do not require legal, medical, or other specialized training as information services and health projects often do. All you need is imagination and dedication.

ACTION
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